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The Culture of the Soul

Among

Western Nations

BY

P. Rámanáthan, K.C., C.M.G.

(Solicitor-General of Ceylon)

In Greece, every Stoic was a Stoic, but in Christendom where is the Christian?

— EMERSON.

Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

— TENNYSON.

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PREFATORY NOTE

It was in the spring of 1903 that the writer first met Mr. Rámanáthan at his home in Colombo, and he had the privilege of hearing from him during the ensuing year many discourses touching the deepest questions of human life. On his return to America he took occasion to make known his high opinion of Mr. Rámanáthan as a spiritual teacher, with the result that invitations to visit and teach in America were sent to him by many having such questions at heart, among them a large number of the members of the Monsalvat School for the Comparative Study of Religion. He responded to these invitations, and has spent a number of months in this country, giving many addresses before the Monsalvat School, the leading universities and various learned societies of the Eastern States. He is now upon his homeward journey.

Mr. Rámanáthan leaves many friends in America; many who have received from him a new light, a new hope, and a new inspiration, which they believe will ever continue to illumine and cheer their pathway through life. It was at the earnest request of some of these friends, who desired to have in permanent form a few at least of the priceless jewels of wisdom which they had heard from his lips, that the manuscript of this volume was prepared and left with the writer of these few lines to be given to the world. May it carry far and wide the fruits of the profound insight of the author into spiritual realities, and the aroma of his sweet and gentle presence.

MYRON H. PHELPS,
of the New York Bar,
Director of the Monsalvat School.

1 EAST THIRTY-NINTH ST.,
NEW YORK, *May*, 1906.

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CHAPTER I

ON "FAITH" OR LOVE OF GOD AS A PRODUCT OF SOUND TEACHING

Confession of Cardinal Newman that the dogmas of the Church are beset with intellectual difficulties and cannot be explained.

His escape from atheism and disbelief of the dogmas through inborn faith in God.

Acceptance of dogmas impossible without faith in God.

The wide prevalence of unbelief among Western nations due to wrong interpretations of the term Faith.

Attempted definition of Faith by ministers of the Church considered.

Faith is not identical with belief, but is the attachment or bond of love which springs from belief.

- It is the equivalent of Sansk. *bhakti* and Gr. *pistis*, derived from rt. *bhadh*, to bind.
- It is not antecedent to, but an immediate consequence of, belief.
- It may be made to dawn in the heart by sound teaching.

A man of spiritual discernment, apt to teach and convince the gainsayer, is necessary to produce love of God.

- Example of Jesus and of St. Paul as effective teachers.
- "Faith cometh by hearing" (a spiritual minded teacher) (Rom. x: 17).
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- Wrong rendering of *ekballei* in Matt. xiii: 52, in the English version, misses the whole meaning of that chapter.

St. Paul's definition of *pistis* or Faith (Heb. xi: 1).

The Evangelists' use of *pistis* (Matt. xxiii: 23) for *agapē* (Luke xi: 43), to denote love of God.

True meaning of the expression *henotēs tēs pisteōs* (Eph. iv: 13), rendered "Unity of faith," is oneness in love.

Fellowship of the perfected spirit with the ever Perfect Spirit (or God) is also expressed by the formula "the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John xiv: 11).

This is "the *mystery* of Faith" or *Godly Love*, which should be cherished in the heart as the central doctrine of true religious life (I Tim. iii: 9). It is also called "the mystery of Godliness" (ib. iii: 16).

ON "FAITH" OR LOVE OF GOD, AS A PRODUCT OF SOUND TEACHING

CARDINAL NEWMAN has candidly observed that he was able to save himself from the perils of atheism only because he was endowed with the needful faith in God, for, said he, "*every article of the Christian creed*, whether as held by Catholics or by Protestants, is *beset with intellectual difficulties*, and it is a simple fact that for myself I *cannot answer those difficulties*" (*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, ch. v). He explained that the strength of his belief in the existence of God was in inverse ratio to his inability to prove it. Were it not for this special feature of his mind, he tells us that his difficulties would have landed him in doubt, and that arguments drawn only from the structure of the world and the general facts of human society

would have led him to be an atheist, a pantheist, or a polytheist. As it was, though he was born and bred in the Church of England, his studies resulted in the conviction that the Anglican interpretation of scripture was quite erroneous; that its special beliefs and practices were nowhere sanctioned in antiquity; that the attempts of the theologians to dress it up doctrinally and æsthetically ended in the "veriest of non-entities," and that it was his duty to accept the Roman Catholic Church as "the oracle of God." He joined that Church, but alas! the oracle of God, as he himself says, did not remove his difficulties as regards any of the articles of the Christian creed. On his conversion he was not conscious of any change, intellectual or moral. To the day of his death neither his learning nor his resources as a prince of the Church are known to have availed aught in the solution of the intellectual obstacles of his earlier days. Feeling in his heart for certain only the existence and power of God, he did not allow his difficulties

to engender doubt or disbelief. Believing, faithful to the last, without, however, being able to produce reasons for his belief, he waited in patience.

How many intellectual Christians are there in the world who, like Cardinal Newman, notwithstanding the difficulties of the dogmas of the Church, believe without doubting? Very few indeed. Such genuine believers as he have in truth no difficulties, for difficulties, that is, obstacles to faith, exist only to unbelievers.

He belonged to the class of believers whose faith is innate, who have glimpses of the heaven they seek. Who that is given to fervent praying and to silent communion with merciful Providence has not borne testimony to joys which he knew not of before? Is it not within the *experience* of every one who rises above his cares and worldly surroundings and, with attention fixed inwards, beseeches the Divine Spirit to help him on in faith and charity, in goodness and love to all, that he has quivered in

limb and faltered in accent, felt himself moved to tears and calmed beyond description in the great Presence? Descending from that holy region, has he not felt that consciousness, purified of its worldly attachments, is instinct with Peace? Such glimpses of light and joy are assurances of the reality of God. They who have *experienced* this blissful state require no proof for belief in Him. They want no reasons for such belief, for they are spiritually-minded already.

If the allegiance to the church of this class of believers is found to rest, not on a conviction of the truth of its dogmas, but upon an innate belief in God, upon a foretaste of heaven actually experienced in prayer and meditation, while "waiting upon" the Lord, what are other men, born as Christians and bred as intellectual athletes, who are not endowed with piety or spiritual experience, to do? How are they to overcome the obstacles which bar the acceptance of Jesus and the Church? Are the unbelievers not to be ministered to, are

they to be allowed to drift to atheism, on the plea that they deserve damnation because they have not been gifted with *faith?* A brave seeker after God has recorded the result of her pilgrimage to an eminent divine, whom she speaks of as a "learned patristic scholar, full of the wisdom of antiquity." The last of her difficulties was the divinity of Christ, and she hoped to have them cleared by the worthy doctor.

"He treated me," she says, "as a penitent going to confession seeking the advice of a director, not as an inquirer struggling after truth, and resolute to find more firm standing ground in the sea of doubt, whether on the shores of orthodoxy or of heresy. He would not deal with the question of the divinity of Christ as a question for argument; he reminded me 'you are speaking of your Judge'; when I pressed some question . . . 'it is not your duty to ascertain the truth,' he told me sternly. 'It is your duty to accept what the Church has laid down for your acceptance. Did not the Lord promise

that the presence of the Spirit should be ever with his Church, to guide her into all truth?'

"'But the fact of the promise and its value are the very points on which I am doubtful,' I answered.

"He shuddered. 'Pray, pray,' he said; 'Father, forgive her for she knows not what she says.'

"It was in vain I urged that I had everything to gain and nothing to lose by following his directions, but that it seemed to me that fidelity to truth forbade a pretended acceptance of that which was not believed.

"'Everything to lose? Yes, indeed you will be lost for time and lost for eternity.' 'Lost or not,' I rejoined, 'I must and will find out what is true, and I will not believe until I am sure.'

"'You have no right to make terms with God,' he answered, 'as to what you will believe and what you will not believe. You are full of intellectual pride.'

"I sighed hopelessly. Little feeling of

pride was there in me just then, and I felt that in this rigid, unyielding dogmatism there was no comprehension of my difficulties — no help for my strugglings. I rose, and thanking him for his courtesy, said that I would not waste his time further, that I must go home and just face the difficulties out, openly leaving the Church and taking the consequences. Then for the first time his serenity was ruffled.

"'I forbid you to speak of your disbelief,' he cried; 'I forbid you to lead into your own lost state the souls for whom Christ died.'

"Slowly and sadly I took my way back to the railway station, knowing that my last chance of escape had failed me."

This is truly a typical case, for, in the words of Cardinal Newman, "what a scene, what a prospect does the whole of Europe present at this day, and not only Europe, but every government and every civilisation throughout the world, which is under the influence of the European mind? . . . . How

sorrowful is the spectacle presented to us by the educated intellect of England, France, and Germany." It is all drifting, he said, to atheism in one shape or another.

The unbelief of the present day is due not a little to the difficulties which exist as to the meaning of the terms *pistis*, *peithō*, and *monogenēs huios* which have been rendered respectively "faith," "believe," and "only-begotten son"; the nature and capacities of the soul; the methods needful to develop spirituality as distinguished from intellectuality; the significance of Christhood; and the relation which God bears to the world and to souls, sanctified and unsanctified.

As regards faith, some dignitaries of the Church declare it to be a supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed. But the numerous Anglican divines who have contributed to the *Lux Mundi*, and who profess to be responsible for that volume as containing "the expression of a common

mind and a common hope," avow in distinct terms that it is incapable of definition or explanation. They say "faith robbed of its habitual aids to expression is summoned to show itself on the field in its own character. And this is just what it never can or may do. It can only reiterate, in response to the demand for definition, 'faith is faith,' 'believing is believing.' Why then let ourselves be distressed or bewildered by finding ourselves reduced to this impotence of explanation?" But yet an explanation, if not a definition, has been bravely attempted in the first essay, which consists of about fifty pages, in the course of which Faith is said to be an active principle, a source of energy, a tentative probation, a fluctuating effort in man to win for himself a valid hold upon things that exist under the conditions of eternity, an instinct of relationship, the discovery of an inherent sonship; it is the primal act of the elemental self, an heroic and chivalrous moral venture; and they sum up their exposition as follows:

"Faith, then, is from first to last a spiritual act of the deepest personal will, proceeding out of the central core of the being, where the self is integral and whole, before it has sundered itself off into divided faculties. There, in that root-self, lie the germs of all that appears in the separate qualities and gifts — in feelings, in reason, in imagination, in desire; and faith, the central activity, has in it, therefore, the germs of all these several activities. It has in it that which becomes reason, yet it is not itself the reason. It holds in it imagination. It is alive with that which desires, craves, loves, yet it is not itself merely an appetite, a desire, a passion. In all these qualities it has its part; it shares their nature; it has kindred motions; it shows itself, sometimes through the one, and sometimes through the other, according to the varieties of human characters." It is for the readers of the learned authors of *Lux Mundi* to say whether or not this exposition of Faith has "distressed" or "bewildered" them.

May "Faith" be explained in clearer terms? The crown of all faiths is faith in God, which with some persons is a natural inclination of the mind (as in the case of Cardinal Newman), and with others a thing to be acquired, like faith in any other matter. The machinery of religion exists for the purpose of not only strengthening faith in God where it already exists, so as to drown by its intensity the mischievous faith in the world (I John v: 4), but also of creating faith in Him where none exists. A religion which fails to recognise this twofold duty argues itself radically defective, and of this twofold duty that of ministering to unbelievers is obviously the more urgent.

"Faith" is commonly supposed to be identical with belief, and lexicographers define those terms to mean the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on either the manifest truth of what he utters or his own authority. But faith is much more than belief. *It is the attachment or bond of love which springs from*

belief. My belief that railway trains ply between New York and Boston does not lead to any bond of love, but my belief that my teacher has done me good evokes at once an attachment in my mind. I allow myself to be influenced by it whenever his name is mentioned. I refuse to believe ill of him without the surest proofs, and am ready to act upon his suggestions, whether he gives me his reasons or not. This love or attachment, which is born of my belief in the goodness or ability of a person, is the meaning of Faith. It is the equivalent of the Sanskrit *bhakti* (love of God, of spiritual guide, etc.), which in Tamil lips becomes *patti ;* in Greek, *pistis* (through *peithō*); in Latin, *fides ;* in English *faith ;* all derived from the root BHADH, the fuller form of which is *bhandh*, to bind.

This bond of love or attachment when it relates to God is known as *pistis*, or love of God, and it dawns in the heart when one believes that God exists, and will help one on in love and light if sought in all earnestness.

It is not antecedent to but is an immediate consequence of belief. Love of God is the earliest meaning of *pistis* and faith, as shown by the derivation of those words. It will be also seen presently (p. 26) that the evangelists have used *pistis* synonymously with *agapē*, which is acknowledged to mean love.

The rise of faith or love of God usually takes place through the instrumentality of a teacher, for the truths which relate to God and to the soul, till made manifest in actual experience, must of necessity rest solely on the authority of the person who propounds them. His private character, attainments, and bearing are the credentials of his authority. Without them a mind that is not credulous will refuse to incline towards him. Where faith or love of God is not innate it manifests itself primarily as love of pupil to teacher, founded upon reasons sufficient to the mental calibre of the pupil. The purer the life of the teacher, the greater his insight, the more masterly his exposition, the

stronger will be his hold on the pupil. It was by such personal qualities that Jesus created in the minds of the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles faith in himself and, by means of that faith, faith in the God he preached. The grand assurance of his words and the wonderful acts he performed in the name of God, his overflowing love and pure disinterestedness, his unblemished life and utter contempt for things worldly, were the grounds upon which thousands and thousands were led to accept him as a true teacher, and to take on trust what he taught regarding God. He was eminently great at teaching. He taught and preached in the cities (Matt. xi: 1). He taught in the temple of Jerusalem daily (Matt. xxvi: 55). He called himself "teacher" (*didaskalos*, Matt. xxvi: 18), and is constantly referred to by others as "teacher." He therefore had learners or "disciples" (*mathētai*) who followed him about and learned of him. He invited all to "follow" him and "learn of" him, but drew a broad distinction between those who were

"worthy" (Matt. x: 36) and not worthy to follow him.

Paul too stood forth as a teacher, declaring "faith (*pistis* or love of God) cometh by hearing" (Rom. x: 17), that is, listening intelligently to and understanding what is communicated by a sanctified teacher. He taught his hearers the knowledge of God according to their capacities, distinguishing between the worldly and the Godly, or, as he said, the "carnal" (or "natural") and the "spiritual," and conveyed to each suitable information, treating some as "babes in Christ" (I Cor. iii: 1) and giving them "milk" or "strong meat" according to their respective needs. He taught them publicly and from house to house (Acts xx: 20), disputed with devout persons and in the market daily with them that met with him (ib. xvii: 17). He insisted that teachers of the gospel should be "apt to teach" (I Tim. iii: 2), "holding fast to the faithful word (or the word of love), as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort

and to *convince* the gainsayers" (Titus i: 9), and he explained that by sound (or health-giving) doctrine was meant "doctrine which is according to godliness" (I Tim. vi: 3), that is, according to those who have become one with God by sanctification of the Spirit, and not according to the conceits of those who are great in book lore or worldly wisdom, for, said Paul, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness" (I Tim. iii: 16). Mark the words "without controversy": incontrovertibly, most assuredly, "godliness" is a mystery, is a profound secret, known only to those who by daily "waiting upon" the Lord "in spirit and truth" (John iv: 23), have attained oneness with Him. Those who have not come to the knowledge of this secret called "Unity of Faith," or oneness with God in love, are men who spoil you through "philosophy and vain deceit" (Col. ii: 9). A knowledge of sound doctrine, or doctrine which assuredly heals the soul of corruption or worldliness, is essential to a true teacher.

Jesus was even more emphatic than Paul as to the necessity of *understanding* what had been communicated, for he said, "when any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, the evil one cometh and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in the heart" (Matt. xiii: 19). Almost the whole of this chapter is devoted to the inculcation of the duty of not only hearing but *understanding* the truths taught. It opens with the parable of the sower: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow, and as he sowed some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured them; and others fell upon rocky places where they had not much earth; and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up, and choked them; and others fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty" (verses 3–8). Jesus

explained the parable as follows (see Revised Translation of 1881): "when anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and *understandeth* it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he (the word) that was sown by the wayside. And he (the word) that was sown upon the rocky places, this (rocky place) is he that heareth the word, and straightway receiveth it with joy, yet when persecution ariseth he straightway stumbleth. And he (the word) that was sown among the thorns, this (thorn) is he that heareth the word and the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. And he (the word) that was sown upon the good ground, this (good ground) is he that heareth the word and *understandeth* it, who verily beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty" (verses 19–23). Jesus then proceeded to illustrate the parable of the sower by the parables of the wheat tares, of the mustard seed, and of

the leaven, in order to show the necessity of fixing the mind on and *understanding* clearly the truth of what is taught, and by a few more parables he desired to impress upon his disciples that, when the doctrines he preached were really understood, *renunciation of the world at heart would necessarily follow and readily lead to Faith or love of God*, for that which obstructs the rise of faith in or love of God is the faith in or love of the world.[1]

The waxing of the love of God depends indeed upon the waning of the love of the world. Emphasising this great truth, one of the disciples said, "Know ye not that the

[1] The parable of the hidden treasure shows that when the truth of the teaching is felt it must necessarily lead to renunciation of the world at heart.

The finding of the treasure is the discovery of the meaning of the teaching. Being overjoyed, the finder hopes to find other treasures in the field (or the kingdom of God), and for its sake he gives up all his worldly possessions.

The parable of the pearl merchant emphasises the truth that such renunciation is inevitable.

And the parable of the drag net is intended to explain the same spiritual experience of human nature.

love of the world is enmity with God?" (James iv: 4). "If any man loves the world," said another disciple, "the love of the Father is not in him" (I John ii: 15).

Jesus concluded his teaching for that day by asking his disciples, "Have ye *understood* all these things?" And upon their answering in the affirmative, he said, "therefore" (meaning, since you say you *understand me*, you will have no difficulty in seeing that) every scribe (that is, every qualified follower of mine) who hath been taught of the kingdom is like unto a man that is master of a house who *throws out of* (*ekballei*) its storeroom (and renounces for ever) all possessions new and old.

It is not a little surprising that the translators of both the authorised and revised versions of the Bible have rendered *ekballei* as "bringeth forth," for such a rendering misses the meaning of the whole chapter, which is one of the most important in the New Testament, declaring as it does the great truth that the "treasures" of the kingdom of God,

known as the "graces" and the "powers" of the spirit, are not to be had until the so-called treasures of worldly life have been *thrown away*, until, as St. Paul says (Phil. iii: 8), "they are all counted as dung so as to win Christ." Had the translators given to this word the sense of casting or throwing out, as they did to *ekballetai* in Matt. xv: 17, there would have been a better chance of understanding the argument of Jesus involved in the word "therefore" (*dia touto*) in verse 52. As it is, no better interpretation of this passage is suggested by the commentators than this: the man who is instructed in the truths of the kingdom will *produce out* of his *stores of learning* the teaching of the Old Testament supplemented by the doctrines of the New Testament! And this, in the face of the well-known truths that learning puffeth up and love edifieth (I Cor. viii: 1), and the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God (I Cor. iii: 19).

Erroneous interpretations of this nature arise from a want of what St. Paul describes

as "the hearing of faith" (or love) *akoē pisteōs* (Gal. iii: 2), that is, the hearing and intelligent understanding of the principles which relate to the development of Faith in, or love of, God. A qualified teacher and a discerning pupil are thus necessary for Faith, where it is not innate (Rom. x: 14, 15).

Viewing Faith, not as a product of credulity, but of effective teaching, Paul defined it as "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi: 1), that is, the realisation or actual experience of that love towards God which was long the object of our search, and the basis on which the spiritual kingdom, unseen by carnal eyes, is felt to be really existent.

Pistis was the religious term among the ancient Greeks for love of God, corresponding to the Sanskrit *bhakti* or *śraddhá*. Early Christians appear to have adopted that sense of the word and also to have often used *agapē* in the same sense.

A comparison of the following verses from the Evangelists will show beyond all doubt

that *pistis* and *agapē* have been used synonymously by them. In his discourse on the misguided life of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus is recorded in the Greek to have said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin (*i.e.*, you are careful enough to pay the taxes due on the smallest garden herbs) and have left unheeded the weightier matters of the law, namely, the spirit of discernment (*krisis*) (which enables one to know the true object of the law); mercy (*eleos* or pity for the faults, sins, or sufferings of others); and love of God (*pistis*)" (Matt. xxiii: 23). Luke's record is as follows: "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over (*i.e.*, do not mind, do not care to cultivate) the spirit of discernment (*krisis*) and the love (*agapē*) of God" (Luke xi: 42). Thus we see that the Evangelists have used *pistis* for *agapē*. And in Jesus' forecast of the events that were to happen in the years following his crucifixion occurs this passage: "Because iniquity shall

abound, the love of God of many a man (*agapē tōn pollōn*) will shrink, but he that standeth firm to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. xxiv: 12, 13). And as love of God and love of neighbour are, as explained by Jesus in Matt. xxii: 39, similar in substance, we find *agapē* used in connection with both God and man: *agapēseis ton theon*, love thy God, and *agapēseis ton plēsion*, love thy neighbour.

St. Paul often uses *pistis* for love of God, as also for belief in God, and *agapē* for two gradations of love, *viz:* love of neighbour or man and love of Christ or God. In I Thes. v: 8, he speaks of children of light putting on *pistis* (love of God) and *agapē* (love of man) as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet, and watching for the day of the Lord (ib. v: 2). And in Eph. iv he impressed on his disciples the duty of loving one another, "forbearing one another in love" (verse 2) — till we all come to a knowledge of Christ (verse 13); and he amplified the same truth in Eph. iii: 14–19, as follows: "I bow

my knees unto the Father . . . that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts through the way of love of God (*pistis*), that ye, being rooted and grounded in neighbourly love (*agapē*), may be strong to apprehend (with all the saints) what is the breadth and length and depth and height (of that love of God), and to know the love (*agapē*) of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

It is noteworthy that the scriptural meaning of Faith as Love has survived in common English in the expression "faithful dog."

Paul explains that Love of God (*pistis*) is to be developed gradually out of self-love, till, attaining its fullest growth, or the state called Christly Love, the perfected saint becomes one with God in Love — in *henotēs tēs pisteōs*, as he terms it (Eph. iv: 13).

Henotēs tēs pisteōs is oneness in Godly love. If the rendering of the Septuagint translators, namely, "unity of faith," is to

stand, it should be understood as meaning oneness of the perfected spirit with the ever Perfect Spirit or God, in regard to love. There is oneness, not in power, but only in love or peace. Endeavour, said St. Paul, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, meaning thereby that oneness of the perfected spirit with God is attainable by the love-bond called peace (Eph. iv: 3).

Henotēs tēs pisteōs, or at-one-ment with God in love, is a great spiritual experience realisable in earthly life by due culture of the spirit or soul up to its utmost growth, and is known to the Sages of India as *átma pūranam* (spiritual fulness), and to the Sages of Judæa as *plērōma tou Christou* (fulness of Christ; Eph. iv: 13). It is only in this state of Perfect Love, as Jesus called it in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v: 48), that complete fellowship with God (I John iii, Phil. ii: 6) or unity is possible.

The development of love to its full maturity is spoken of by St. Paul as the *formation of Christ in man* (Gal. iv: 19), as the *putting*

on of the New Man, evolved in righteousness and holiness by the renewal or remodelling of the mind (Eph. iv: 23, 24), that is, by altering erroneous modes of thought and guiding oneself by the principles of eternal life.

St. Paul speaks of the development of the soul or spirit to its full maturity (*hēlikia*, Eph. iv: 13) called Christhood or Messiahship, as a mystery, the mystery of Christ in man (Col. i: 27); and of the oneness of Christ (or the perfected spirit) with the ever Perfect Spirit called God, as a mystery also, the mystery of God and Christ (Col. ii: 2).

This mysterious fellowship in actual experience was denoted by Jesus by the words "I (the perfected son) am in the Father, and the Father is in me" (John xiv: 11). It is co-existence in indivisible union. Owing to the union being intimate and inseparable, he said on another occasion, "I and the Father are one" (John x: 30). Those happy expressions convey the deep truth that the Perfected Spirit enters into union with the

ever Perfect Spirit and remains in inseparable fellowship with It in love and righteousness unto eternity.

This indeed is the meaning of *henotēs tēs pisteōs*. *Henotēs* or unity is not in belief but in love. Considering the actual growth of the Spirit or Soul, and the exact relation it bears to God (as certified by those who have attained its fullest growth and entered into indivisible union with God), and remembering also the fact that *pistis* has been used by the Evangelists as a synonym for *agapē*, denoting love, we ought to render *henotēs tēs pisteōs* as Unity of Love (and not unity of belief merely), meaning thereby the great spiritual experience known to the perfected spirits, to wit, the oneness of such spirits with God in love and peace for all time.

This is "the *mystery* of faith" (*mustērion tēs pisteōs*) or godly love which St. Paul insisted should be cherished in the heart as the central doctrine of true religious life (I Tim. iii: 9). It is also called "the mystery of Godliness" (ib. iii: 16).

CHAPTER II

SCRIPTURE AND ITS INTERPRETATION

Difficulty of interpreting the texts of the Bible. Is *literal* meaning to prevail or *intended* meaning?

The wresting of the Scriptures by the "unlearned" and "unstable" (II Pet. iii: 16) began in the first century.

Who are the "unstable" and the "unlearned"?

The exegesis of the Jewish Scriptures how guarded.

Translation of the Hebrew Bible in Greek, called the Septuagint version, in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (284–247 B.C.).

Interpretation of the hidden truths of the Bible must be according to the meaning intended to be conveyed by the Biblical Sages who were men of deep spiritual experience.

Why the Sages spoke in parables.

Jesus on interpretation — "Go ye and learn what that meaneth."

Philo's methods of interpretation.

The views of the Christian Fathers, Clement and Origen, of the Catechetical School of Alexandria.

Counter influence of the literal interpretation of the School of Antioch, and the final suppression of spiritual interpretation.

Proper interpretation of the Bible cannot be lost so long as men of deep spiritual experience exist on earth.

The comforting words of Jesus: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed" (Matt. x: 26). "Seek and ye shall find" (ib. vii: 7).

The Revelation to St. Paul (Gal. i: 11–20).
His teachings not received from man, but received from God in Spiritual Communion.

Importance of holding fast to the interpretation or knowledge vouchsafed to Sages in Spiritual Communion.

Orthodoxy or Right Teaching is the teaching that is consistent with the spiritual experience of sanctified men.

They are "able ministers not of the letter, but of the spirit" (II Cor. iii: 6).

Spiritual experience is the "Key of Knowledge" (Luke xi: 52) or the "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. xvi: 19).

SCRIPTURE AND ITS INTERPRETATION

THE determination of the true meaning and scope of "Faith" in the expression "Unity of Faith" does not settle the difficulties of the intellectual unbeliever. For, though with the help of that definition he may feel that he has a right to linger still in the Christian fold, yet must he own that his desire to "have Faith" in God, that is, to love and rely on God and to know God in truth, cannot be gratified without sound doctrine as to the nature of God, of the spirit in the human body, and of the world, and as to the relation which they bear to each other. The Bible contains many a doctrine relating to these subjects. It records the sayings and doings of the Lawgivers, Prophets, and Saints whose names they bear. But who can interpret the texts of the Bible in the sense intended by the writers?

When words are used to express one's meaning, are such words to be construed literally or according to the meaning intended by the author? Is the *literal* meaning to prevail or the *intended* meaning? Obviously the intended meaning. But who can declare the intended meaning? Obviously those who know the speaker thoroughly, or who have lived lives precisely similar to those of the speaker. A worldly saying is best interpreted by a man of worldly experience. Even so, a spiritual saying is best interpreted by a man of spiritual experience. Experience indeed is the touchstone of interpretation.

The true interpretation of the Bible has always been a matter of dispute from the earliest times. St. Peter, referring to the written documents current in his day as the sayings of Jesus, or the Reminiscences (*memorabilia*) of Jesus Christ, or the Gospel of Peace, said, "according to the wisdom (or spiritual experience) given unto him, Paul hath written unto you, as also in all his

Epistles, . . . in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are *unlearned* and *unstable wrest* as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter iii: 16).

The "*unstable*" are those who, not being established in God, know not God and have no spiritual discernment; and the "unlearned" are those who have not learnt at the feet of those who have spiritual discernment.

The exegesis of the Jewish Scriptures was carefully guarded by the Rabbis of Jerusalem in the voluminous writings known as the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud. The earliest of these interpretations was the *midrash* (instruction) divided into legal and homiletical expositions. The *Halacha* or legal exposition dealt with the Pentateuch and deduced therefrom a collection of precepts, entitled *Halachoth.* The homiletical exposition called the *Hagada* related to the whole of the Old Testament in its practical application to religious, ethical, and social questions.

The moral and ritual rules of the Talmud, which are precepts not explicitly stated in the Bible, are all founded on *Cabbala* or tradition handed down from generation to generation. This Rabbinic system of exegesis called the Cabbala (Heb. *Quabbalah*, traditionary interpretations, from *Kabal*, to receive) declared that every text of the Bible was capable of a fourfold interpretation denoted by the letters P. R. D. S., which stood for the words *Peshat* (explanation), *Remez* (hint), *Darush* (homily) and *Sod* (mystery). The Rabbis said that on this basis the Law was explainable in forty-nine different ways.

When Jerusalem submitted to Alexander the Great, in 322 B.C., he caused a great number of the Jewish captives to be deported to Alexandria, which he had newly built in Egypt, and in 301 B.C. Ptolemy Soter carried off many more thousands of Jews for settlement in the same city. Within a few years the new settlers prospered vastly by intercourse with the Egyptians

and the Greeks and other foreign races who flourished in Alexandria. At the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus (in 284–247 B.C.), who was engaged in collecting the laws of all nations for the great library at Alexandria, a body of most learned Jews, numbering about seventy, undertook the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, which afterward became famous as the Septuagint (lxx), came into use in the synagogues, and led to an outburst of Jewish literature. Copies of this Alexandrian version found their way into Palestine, and in the time of Jesus Christ the original Hebrew version had fallen into disuse. The quotations of the Apostles of Jesus appear to have been made from the Septuagint.

One of the most cultured among the Alexandrine Jews was Philo Judæus, of the Levite tribe, born in the days of Jesus. A master of the literature of his nation and of that of the Greeks and possessed of much spiritual insight, he wrote copiously of the Jewish Faith and insisted, as Jesus and St. Paul had done, that the interpretation of the Bible

should be according to the meaning intended by the speaker. "Thou hast hid these things from the (worldly-) wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes (or the unworldly)," said Jesus in Matt. xi: 25, speaking of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which is in us, in the spirit within the body. "The cares of the world and the deceptive nature of riches and desires for other (worldly) things entering in, choke the word of God" (Mark iv: 19). So that the carnal minded "hearing, hear not, and seeing, see not, neither do they understand" (Matt. xiii: 13). When, therefore, they — whether priests or laymen — enter upon the task of interpreting those passages in the Bible which relate to spiritual experiences or truths, "they are blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. xv: 14), bound both to fall into the ditch. Nor is it useful for the man who has spiritual insight to try to communicate the deeper experiences of the spirits to one who "cannot hear," that is, who hearing cannot understand. "Why do ye not

understand my speech?" asked Jesus. "Even because ye *cannot* hear my word," said he (John viii: 43). "Every one of the truth heareth my voice" (ib. xviii: 37). Those who are fit for hearing spiritual truths are the Godly minded, not the worldly ones. "My sheep (*i.e.*, the Godly minded) hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (ib. x: 27). Others "do err," by misunderstanding the words (Matt. xxii: 29), and get into perilous frames of mind, becoming controversial, angry, spiteful, and even murderous. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you," said Jesus (Matt. vii: 6).

Therefore, in addressing a promiscuous gathering it is necessary to speak or write in allegory, parables, or proverbs. "I shall open my mouth in parables" said the Psalmist (Ps. lxxviii: 2). So the prophet after crying out "Hear, ye *deaf*, and look, ye *blind*, that ye may see" (Is. xlii: 18), and "The

eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken" (Is. xxxii: 3) said in allegory, "Now will I sing *to my well beloved* a song of my beloved, touching his *vineyard*" (Is. v : 1), and again, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not *bread*, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me and *eat* ye that which is good and let your soul delight itself in *fatness*" (Is. lv: 2). Jesus said, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth" (Matt. ix: 13): such sayings as "They that are *whole* need not a physician, but they that are *sick*" (ib.); "Give us this day our daily *bread*;" "Our Father which art *in Heaven*;" "Thy *kingdom* come;" "I and my *Father* are *one* (John x: 30);" "I am *a son of God*" (ib. 36). "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs" (ib. xvi: 25), explained Jesus. He usually taught in proverbs or parables, and the disciples said unto him, "Why speakest thou in parables?" And he answered "*Unto you* (the spiritually minded) is given

to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but *to them* (the worldly minded) it is not given" (Matt. xiii: 10–12).

Ever faithful, Philo reproduced in his works to the best of his ability this occult or esoteric principle of teaching. He explained that the interpretation of the Bible should be verbal (literal) for the illiterate and the elementary in faith, and *allegorical* for those who are mature enough in spirit to crave for the inner meaning of the words.

By allegory is meant a speech or discourse which conveys a meaning different from the literal one (*allos*, other, and *agoreuō*, I speak).

Parable (*parabolē*), comparison, derived from *para*, by the side of, and *ballō* I throw, means a discourse which suggests only a comparison between two things. God and soul, being purely spiritual, cannot be explained sufficiently by words. No description on the part of a person who has known them can make another know them, even as the taste of water cannot be expressed in words.

They are to be known personally and not by hearsay. Therefore, Sanctified Sages, who know the "Son" and the "Father" in actual experience as transcending quantity and quality, can only say "they are *like* this." The discourse barely reaches the subject aimed at. It only indicates it without actually touching it. The hearer must labor hard on the lines indicated, and attain the goal in actual experience.

Proverb and *Parable* stand alike for the Hebrew work *mashal.* The Greek translators rendered *mashal* in the Septuagint as *paroimia*, and the Latin equivalent of it in the Vulgate is *proverbium*, meaning primarily similitude. It is applicable to any kind of simile or allegory.

Philo's esoteric interpretation is frequently quoted by Clement and Origen, two of the greatest of the Christian Fathers of the great *Didascaleion* or Catechetical School of Alexandria which claimed as its founder the Evangelist St. Mark. St. Clement disapproved of bodily or literal (*sarkikos*) interpretation

and emphatically declared that "nothing should be deduced from Scripture *but what is in accordance with the Divine Nature*" (Stromata, ii: 16). To whom is this Divine Nature known but to *the Sanctified in Spirit?* (John x: 36.) Their spiritual knowledge is obviously the truth in matters relating to the Spirit. Origen taught that as man consists of body and soul, so the words of Scripture relate to the visible and the invisible, and that the *inner* (esoteric) meaning or *spirit of the words* could not be discovered unless the interpretation were made historically, morally, and mystically. But the influence of the Catechetical School of Alexandria was gradually shattered by the School of Christians established at Antioch, the capital of the Greek Kings of Syria, and so at last the mystic exegesis or spiritual interpretation of the Bible perished.

But the proper interpretation of the Bible cannot be lost so long as men of deep spiritual experience exist on earth. The words of Jesus are comforting: "There is nothing

covered that shall not be revealed, nothing hid that shall not be known" (Matt. x: 26). "Ask and it shall be given unto you: seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you" (ib. vii: 7).

St. Paul knocked and it was opened unto him,— all the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. "God hath *revealed* them unto us (*i.e.*, me) by his spirit. . . . Now we (*i.e.*, I) have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are *freely* given to us by God: which things also we (*i.e.*, I) speak, not in the words which man's wisdom (or worldly experience) teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither *can* he know them, *because they are spiritually discerned*" (I Cor. ii: 10–14).

Thus it is clear that one who is not blessed with Spiritual Discernment cannot comprehend spiritual truths, and ought therefore

to "walk after the traditions" or traditional interpretation of those who have spiritual discernment (II Thes. ii: 15 and iii: 6), and not to exercise one's private judgment in matters relating to the spirit. "Judge nothing before the time *until the Lord come*, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart" (I Cor. iv: 5), was the emphatic declaration of Paul. Mark the words, "until the Lord come," not objectively, outside of the human organism, *in nubibus*, but subjectively, as Peter explains it, "until the day dawn, and the day star arise, *in your hearts*" (II Peter i: 19). Paul impresses on Christians, as an essential condition of faithful discipleship, that they should not venture to judge or criticise the Traditional Interpretation until the finding of Christ in their hearts, until by proper methods they have cleansed their consciousness of every trace of worldliness and made their souls as radiant and pure, as "godly," as Jesus' was. Then and then only would be made manifest "the

counsels of the heart," that is, the mysteries of the spiritual side of man: then and then only would they be able to "Judge," to discern, whether the Traditional Interpretation delivered to them by him and Sages like him is or is not consistent with Truth.

In the teachings of the disciples of Jesus which have come down to us, there is little to show that the mysteries of the kingdom of God were "made manifest" to them all. They had heard his discourses, followed him about, seen his works, and even performed miracles, but as to their personal knowledge of the truth taught them there is hardly any evidence which may be called satisfactory (cf. Acts i: 5; ii: 2–13; and Matt. vii: 22). John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," stands on a different footing. He must be considered more than a historian of Jesus, because, like Jesus, he bears original testimony to the kingdom of God. "The Life" (called the Light of men in John i: 4) he declared "was manifested and we have seen It, and bear witness and show unto you that

Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us" (I John i: 2). Life eternal is the unchanging "I am" or Pure Spirit in man, and its glory John did behold within himself, the glory of the Father, as well as the glory of the Son (John i: 14), identically the same in substance, being one in spirit — in Unity of Faith (I Cor. vi: 17; Eph. iv: 3). Speaking, therefore, from personal experience, John spoke almost if not quite as authoritatively and uncompromisingly as Jesus did, "Believe not every spirit" (*pneuma*) [every man who poses as a purified soul, claiming to know the mysteries of the kingdom] "but," said he, "try the spirits whether they are of God" (I John iv: 1); and his Epistle contains ample instructions to distinguish the true from the false spirit.

To return to Paul. His exposition was also based on his own spiritual experience. He is not known to have seen or heard Jesus in life. He avows that he proclaimed the truth of the Kingdom of God, not second

hand, but as manifested to him in his own consciousness. "I certify you, brethren," said he to the Galatians, "that the gospel which was preached of me *is not after any man.* For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it. . . . But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb (that is, my soul from sensuous life), and called me by His grace, in order to reveal His *Son in me*, . . . immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were Apostles before me; but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God I lie not" (Gal. i: 11–20). Thus let into the mysteries of the kingdom of God, — made to realise the great spiritual experience called Unity of Faith or oneness with God in love, — he likened himself to a "wise master

builder," and said simply and truly, "I have laid the foundation; . . . other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. . . . But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon . . . for the day shall declare it" (I Cor. iii: 10, 13). He means that the foundation which was revealed to him was identical with the foundation which was revealed to Jesus, namely, "the son" (Matt. xvi: 16, 18) or the perfected Spirit in whom God abides as in a temple, and through whom God reveals all the principles of true life. The evil of men who, "seeming to be wise in this world" (I Cor. iii: 18), attempt to expound the doctrines or to prescribe practices for the attainment of the Temple of God, which is the spirit in the body, is also clearly pointed out. When the day dawns, and the day star arises in the heart, its light of "fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is: if any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward; if any man's work shall be burned, he shall

suffer loss" (I Cor. iii: 15). The absolute certainty of exposure of unsound doctrines and practices as soon as "Unity of Faith" or Godly Experience is attained, and their mischievous effects on both him who propounds and those who adopt them, could not have been more impressively declared.

The simple duty of "babes in Christ" is to work according to the Traditional Interpretation, that is, the communication made to Sages by God in spiritual communion, in order that by "love of the truth" (*pistis alētheias*) taught by the qualified teacher and "sanctification of the spirit" (or complete purification of the soul from its worldly attachments), they may be "saved" (II Thes. ii: 15), that is, healed of corruption, so as to be rendered fit for fellowship with God.

According to Jesus and his Apostles, indeed according to the very nature of things, no man can know whether the Traditions or communications from God made to those who are in fellowship with Him are consistent or not with truth except after his own

"salvation," except after he himself has had the great experience of Unity of Faith, or at-one-ment with God in love.

The ultimate standard of Orthodoxy (right teaching) is this actual experience of the spirit, or complete knowledge of the spirit, or full "spiritual discernment" (I Cor. ii: 14). As worldly Truths are accepted on the testimony of men great in the knowledge of the world and tested in due course by one's own experience, so Spiritual Truths must be accepted at first on the testimony of men great in the knowledge of the spirit, and brought ultimately in the fulness of time to the touchstone of one's own experience of the spirit.

St. Paul declares that his preaching of Christ in man (Col. i: 27) is not "the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world" (Col. ii: 8), that is, traditions founded upon the material or sensual perceptions of men. They are not "philosophy" (ib.) or speculative thought, for "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God"

(I Cor. iii: 19). He means to say that the knowledge of things founded upon the reports of the senses and inferences of thought is utterly misleading as regards knowledge of God, who transcends thoughts, who is Pure Spirit. The traditions relating to the spirit are traditions after Christ (Col. ii: 8), that is, traditions according to those who have attained the maturity of the spiritual state called the Fulness of Christ (Eph. iv: 13) — "doctrine which is according to Godliness" (I Tim. vi: 3), that is, truths ascertained in the deep spiritual communion known as "Unity of Faith" or Oneness with God in Spirit. This actual knowledge of God makes men able interpreters, "not of the letter, but of the spirit" (II Cor. iii: 6), of books of Spiritual Experiences, like the Bible. Jesus referred to this knowledge of the soul and knowledge of God as "the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. xvi: 19), or the "Key of Knowledge" (Luke xi: 52), that is, the Key called Knowledge of Truth Eternal.

CHAPTER III

ON THE TRADITIONAL ORAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND THE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES OF ITS LOSS TO WESTERN NATIONS

Jesus taught wholly by word of mouth, and his traditions were not available in writing for many years after his crucifixion.

Why such traditions were meagrely and even obscurely committed to writing.

St. Paul's reference to oral and written traditions (II Thes. ii: 15).

The Catholic Church's claim that the oral interpretation is still in its custody denied by the reformed churches.

Archbishop Thomson's views considered.

The investigations of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, 140 A.C.

The loss of oral tradition led to multiplicity of interpretations of the written tradition.

Attempt of Emperor Constantine to settle a creed for Christendom by a conclave of Bishops.

The first Œcumenical Council held at Nicæa, A.C. 325, and other councils.

Difficulties of distinguished Churchmen with regard to the dogmas.

Christianity converted into Churchianity by literary and historical problems, full of vain "questions and strifes of words" (I Tim. vi: 4).

Effect of these controversies on the educated intellects of Western lands.

Rise of agnosticism, irreverence, materialism, and atheism.

Wide prevalence of self-love.

Nature of self-love considered.

Self-love a menace alike to the household and state.

Dangers of education devoid of spiritual knowledge.
Commercial dishonesty.
Immorality in politics.
Sensationalism in literature.
Poverty and crime in cities.
Infidelity and belief in externals.

True goal of civilisation is love of God and love of fellowmen.

Necessity for right interpretation of the Bible, so as to make it a book of living spiritual force among the people.

Practicability of such interpretation through the *Jivanmuktas* or *Jnánis* of India.

ON THE TRADITIONAL ORAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND THE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES OF ITS LOSS TO WESTERN NATIONS

Jesus delivered his tradition wholly by word of mouth, and so did his disciples for many years after the crucifixion. Then by degrees his sayings and doings were committed to writing meagrely and even obscurely, lest they should be misunderstood, misapplied, or despised, or should lead to the injury or destruction of the bearers of the traditions. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you," said Jesus (Matt. vii: 6), knowing that it was the habit of his countrymen to discredit and persecute prophets and Sages from city to city (Matt. v: 12, xxiii: 37). The work

of redemption of those who hunger and thirst for Peace, when actively carried on, has always involved the redeemers in danger, for the simple reason that the doctrines relating to the Sanctification of the Spirit falsify the ways of the worldly-minded, both teachers and the taught, who are the blind leading the blind. The seeds of truth are, therefore, not acceptable to them and should not be given to them. It is not only Jesus who suffered crucifixion, but Peter also; and Paul was beheaded (A.C. 68). And as to those who by native disposition or previous culture are qualified to receive the truth, only so much of it should be given at a time as the intellectual and spiritual condition of each can assimilate. Therefore did Isaiah say in impressive language "the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they might go and fall backward, and be broken and snared and taken" (Isa. xxviii: 13). The necessity of "snaring" those born and bred to the ways of the world,

and taking them captive only gradually and by a slow leavening process, did not permit Paul and other masters to record openly even for these spirits the Traditions relating to the Kingdom of God. From such causes arose the meagreness and obscurity of the Scriptures. It should not be supposed that the Scriptures are not part of the traditions, for Paul clearly says that the traditions were written and unwritten. "Stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle" (II Thes. ii: 15). The Scripture is the written Tradition, and its necessary complement is oral tradition.

It is maintained by the Catholic Roman Church that the traditional oral interpretation of Scripture, "coming first from God and continually taught, is in all desirable ways kept alive by a body of trustworthy men successively chosen in a divine or divinely appointed manner, and well instructed, who are moreover protected by God as a body from teaching what is wrong

or handing down unfaithfully to others the doctrine committed to them" (*Catholic Belief*, by the Very Rev. Dr. J. di Bruno). The Protestant Sects, on the other hand, deny the existence of any such oral tradition. "Beyond the Bible nothing exists," said the late Archbishop Thomson, of the Church of England. "When Athanasius is vindicating (A.C. 319) against Arius the divine character of our Lord, it is notable that he does not appeal to the traditions or the like; he appeals text by text to the blessed word of God. When Thomas Aquinas, in the days of a great new literature then reviving (A.C. 1275), has to grapple with the mighty task of putting in its proper place that new literature, he again appeals constantly to the final law and word, the Divine Books. . . . So, when we come down to the present moment, we are obliged to admit that, if indeed it should ever happen that criticism should undermine the authority of the Word of God, it leaves us nothing beyond. . . . The Bible is the authority of High Churchmen

and Low Churchmen, the authority of every one who in the name of God preaches Christ's gospel day after day. There is no other ultimate authority. However we may endeavour to interpret and associate the word of Scripture with other teaching, all acknowledge that the Word of God sets forth Christ and his nature; that it needs nothing to interpret it practically in all the great outlines of the Christian faith" (*Address to the British and Foreign Bible Society*, delivered at Exeter Hall on May 7, 1890).

It is idle to deny the difficulties of interpreting what are expressly declared in the Bible to be the *mysteries* of the Kingdom of God (Mark iv: 11), the *mystery* of Godliness (I Tim. iii: 16), the *hidden* wisdom (I Cor. ii: 7), the many *hard* sayings (John vi: 60), proverbs (John xvi: 25) and parables (Matt. xiii: 34, Luke viii: 8), the *mystery* of the gospel of peace (Eph. vi: 15, 19), the *mystery* of Christ in God (Col. i: 26, 27), or the formation of Christ in man

(Gal. iv: 19), or the *mystery* of the Unity of Love (Eph. iv: 13), and other mysteries. It is equally idle to deny oral traditions altogether, because St. Paul refers to them especially (II Thes. ii: 15; I Cor. xi: 2), and Jesus' sayings were obviously not all committed to writing lest "dogs" and "swine" should read them. It is also incorrect to say that Thomas Aquinas appealed to the Bible as the final law, for (as Dr. T. M. Lindsay points out) this great writer, whom Pope John XXII canonised, insisted that "Revelation is not Scripture alone, for Scripture taken by itself does not correspond exactly with his descriptions; nor is it Church tradition alone, for Church tradition must so far rest on Scripture. Revelation is a divine source of knowledge, of which Scripture and Church tradition are the channels" (Art. "Aquinas," in *Encyclop. Britannica*). The unwritten tradition, delivered by Jesus, John, Paul, and others, had ceased to influence the Church long before the controversies which necessitated the calling of the Œcumenical

councils came to a head, not because the unwritten tradition never existed, but because it was lost.

In the first century, the Christian Church, known among orthodox Hebrews as the *minim* or Heretics, was itself split up into many Heresies or Schools of Doctrines, manifesting much hatred towards each other. In the earliest decades after the Ascension we see the Judæo-Christians engaged in a severe conflict with the Gentile Christians, owing to a complete misunderstanding of the spiritual meaning of the doctrines of Jesus. The oral traditions of the great Master were already lost to the Judaisers. After the separation of the disciples of Jesus, commonly known as the Apostles of Jesus, their immediate disciples and fellow-labourers worked in different centres and were known as the Apostolic Fathers, such as Barnabas (the companion of St. Paul and the author of the Epistles of Barnabas), Clemens Romanus (the Bishop of Rome, 93–101 A.C.), Ignatius (the Bishop of Antioch, martyred 109

A.C.), Polycarp (the Bishop of Smyrna, martyred 166 A.C.), and Hermas (the author of the Pastor of Hermas). Their days were full of factions. The different Christian Churches were holding fast to the Bible so far as it had been put together, but had not the Key of Knowledge to interpret truly the texts which created the manifold misunderstandings. Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis, who wrote a book called the *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord*, about the year 140, declares that he did his best to investigate the traditional interpretations of Jesus by inquiring of those who had "attached themselves to the elders" what Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, and other disciples of the Lord had delivered to them (Bishop Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 527, *et seq.*). He speaks so apologetically of the oral traditions which he had gathered, as to clearly indicate that, even in the early part of the second century, it was hopeless to attempt to restore them. The loss of the oral

exposition would of course necessitate a multiplicity of "interpretations," varying according to the number of factions then in existence, and this is precisely what the testimony of Bishop Papias establishes.

Though among the Christian sects there was great misunderstanding as to the meaning of the many mysteries of the Kingdom of God, the reverence they felt for Jesus and his Apostles, their firm belief in a future state, their contempt for sensuousness, their purity of character in private life, and their constant expectation of the coming of Christ and the reign of God, sorely troubled the Roman government. It saw how Christianity thrived in spite of its edicts and persecutions; how Christian martyrs marching to the fagots that were ready to consume them prophesied that the Saints would inherit the earth; and how in many ways this new religion, spreading itself into the towns and the civil and military services of the Roman Empire, dared to match itself against it and Judaism together.

In the third and the commencement of the fourth centuries, the dissensions among Christians grew to be so widespread that Emperor Constantine thought it prudent in the interest of general peace to bring about a reconciliation, and for that purpose to convene an assembly of ecclesiastics of every rank, sect, and denomination, computed at two thousand forty-eight persons, of whom three hundred and eighteen were bishops (Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, III, chap. xx, p. 39). This was the first Œcumenical Council, held at Nicæa in Bithynia, A.C. 325. The session lasted about two months and resulted in the adoption of the Nicene Creed.

From the third to the middle of the fifth century the chief problem of theological speculation was as regards the central doctrine itself of Christianity, namely, the person of Christ and the function of Christ. Four great councils attempted to solve this fundamental difficulty. They were held at Nicæa, as already said, in 325; at Constantinople

in 381; at Ephesus in 431, and Chalcedon in 451.

The Chalcedonian Creed ranks next in authority to the Apostles' Creed (Acts x: 36–43) and the Nicene Creed. Six hundred and thirty bishops and deputies met in Chalcedon, a city opposite Constantinople on the Bosphorus, at the request of Emperor Marcianus, in order to settle the controversies raised on the subject of the Person of Christ by the Eutychians and Nestorians. The proceedings during the three weeks of the council's session were so tumultuous that the lay commissioners of the Emperor had to urge the Church dignitaries to keep order, saying that such vulgar outcries (*ekboēseis dēmotikai*) were disgraceful. By a majority, the Eutychian and Nestorian controversies were over-ruled and a Creed adopted.

What though conclaves of learned Bishops, backed by the authority of puissant Emperors, undertook to determine for Western Nations what the Christian Creed should be? It is admitted by some of the most sagacious

of Christian theologians to be only a formula of words, difficult to understand and impossible to realise. The great Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, candidly confessed that as often as he tried to meditate, for instance, on the divinity of the Logos, his efforts recoiled on themselves, and the more he thought of it, the less he comprehended it (Athanasius, Tom. 1, p. 808). St. Augustine (A.C. 430) also owned that there are more things in the Bible he did not understand than those he did. And we have the testimony in our own days of Cardinal Newman that "*every article* of the Christian Creed, whether as held by the Catholics or by the Protestants, is beset with intellectual difficulties, and it is simple fact," said he, "that for myself I cannot answer those difficulties." Thus has dogma taken the place of the quickening precepts of Jesus and Paul. The *Christianity* taught by these masters has been, alas, "killed " (II Cor. iii: 6) by unsound interpretation, and there remains now instead *Churchianity*, or an

aggregate of different literary and historical problems full of vain "questions and *strifes of words*" (I Tim. vi: 4), wholly incapable of making man wise unto salvation (II Tim. iii: 15). The educated intellects of the Western world, in full appreciation of the fact that, if moral principles and the personal history of the heroes of the Bible were expunged from it, little would remain for intelligent comprehension or practical acceptance, have agreed, some to discredit the lights of the Church, others to view the salvation preached by Jesus as an idle fancy. What disastrous consequences have flown from a want of sound religious knowledge and belief in a future! People have become steeped in worldliness, materialism, irreverence, and atheism.

A worldly minded person is a stumbling block unto himself and to every guileless person. He is what St. Paul calls a Lover of Self. To give the full sense of the words in II Tim. iii: 2–7: "In the domestic circle, the Lover of Self or self-lover pays no heed

to the voice of his natural guardians, is devoid of affection for those whom he should love, is unthankful, not willing to oblige, nor easily pacified. Abroad, he puts on the appearance of goodness without believing in its virtue, is false in friendship, given to belittling others, boastful of his own deeds, unforgiving, scornful, much inclined to the pleasures of the senses, easily urged by external influences, and led away by divers desires."

A person actuated by self-love is a menace alike to the household and state. Mere intellectual education makes the self-lover skilled in the art of doing without compunction what others of fine feeling are ashamed, or have not the heart, to do. He is often a clever rogue — great in evading detection. When selfish persons take to economical life and deal with the creation and distribution of commodities necessary for the maintenance and comfort of the body, they adulterate foodstuffs, resort to mean devices in production, and charge excessive prices for the

articles made or carried. Others resort to what is called "pooling" in America, or the sweeping together of commercial interests so as to form monopolies or "trusts," the profits of which go to enrich them at the expense of the ordinary consumer. They raise and lower prices at will and care not for the fate of the petty trader. Not content with the advantages enjoyed by them, they invade the political arena and buy up largely the elective power of the people. They then press on all sides upon the government and endeavour to control legislation at their will. In the field of literature, too, their baneful influence is in the ascendant. They form the largest portion of the nation, and their taste for reading is all in the line of sentimental and sensational amusement. Consequently, those who are engaged in the production of books, magazines, and newspapers find themselves obliged to write and publish what is funny, fanciful, and thrilling, to the serious neglect of the higher life of humanity. The

materialism of the age has affected the very teachers of spirituality. Many and wealthy are the churches, and learned and eloquent are the preachers, but the congregations and the rulers thereof have agreed to don and doff their religion with their Sunday clothes. The constituted leaders of religion do not appear to have a hold on the people and they are all, with the exception of a few, drifting to the perils of a life devoid of a goal. As to the scientists, who are nobly labouring in colleges and other places, their discoveries have been applied to the further materialisation of the country by sensuous seekers of the "almighty dollar."

Spirituality may be said to be just trying to live in exceptional places only, for the self-lover is rampant everywhere. An undeveloped multitude — undeveloped in love and light, undeveloped in the art of distinguishing between that which is perishable and imperishable — undeveloped in spiritual discernment — has been made immensely powerful by the elective franchise and is

rapidly disintegrating the influence for good of the highest and best part of England and other countries on both sides of the Atlantic. In the East end of London and other poverty-stricken cities of the Western world, gaunt women with tangles of matted hair and wild eyes move through filthy courts amidst filthier men deep in drink, gibbering, and cursing. When I turn from this, says a cultured Englishman, speaking of England in particular, and see deadly respectability quaffing its wine and discussing the rise and fall of stocks; when I see the struggle, the fear, the envy, the profound infidelity in which the monied classes live; when the faces of their children come to me pleading, pleading — every bit as the children of the city poor—for one touch of nature; of children who have been stuffed with lies all their lives, who have been told that they cannot do without this and that and a thousand things, all of which are wholly unnecessary; of children who have been taught to reverence ridicule, and sleep in unbelief and act

against all their truer instincts till their young judgments are confused and their finer impulses actually cease to be a guide to them; when I hear and see the droning and seesawing of pulpits, when the vision of perfect vulgarity and commonplaceness called society arises upon me with all its theory of what it is to be a lady or a gentleman, of exclusiveness and of being in the swim, of the drivel of aristocratic connections, of drawing-rooms and animated clothes pegs; when I see the sea of infidelity and of belief in externals spreading among town councillors, cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, generals, judges, bishops; when I look for help from the guides and see only a dead waste of simpering faces, O! England, whither, strangled, tied, and bound, art thou come? asks this spiritually-minded man.

Similarly situated are other countries of Europe and America. Their governors find themselves paralysed in the performance of their duty of keeping order amidst this seething selfish humanity.

Are not the complex problems of western civilisations due to an imperfect appreciation on the part of the governors and the governed as to what Progress is? Does not true Progress mean growth of the *Spirit* in Light and Love? Is not Civilisation the force intended to develop self-love into neighbourly love, and neighbourly love into Christly Love, or the love that would labour for others unthanked and even unrecognized, just as God works in the world of men for their own good, unseen and caring naught for their praises and abuses? What have the governments of Christian countries done to develop spiritual growth? Is not the first step in this growth the distinction between the perishable and the imperishable, between the body and the spirit, and what book is there in the West which contains so much teaching on Spiritual Discernment as the Bible? Should it not be rightly interpreted and made to be a living force among the people, instead of the discredited book it has become?

It is earnestly submitted that though the dogmas of the Church are, in the words of Cardinal Newman, "beset with intellectual difficulties" and are not to be explained, yet the doctrines of Jesus are neither difficult to understand nor inexplicable, for the simple reason that he taught those who were hungering for Light nothing more than what he actually knew as *real Truth and what may still be verified* by similar seekers. No longer should his authority be made to rest only on the historical and literary problems relating to the authenticity of the books of the New Testament and the dogmas of the Church, for then Jesus and the other Sages of Judæa will continue till the end of time to be impeached. The most certain proofs of their genuineness are to be found in the experiences of those living men who have progressed in spirit and attained the same state which they did. It is only they who can explain the true meaning of the words and acts of Jesus. "God has made us able ministers of the New Testament," said Paul, "not of

the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (II Cor. iii: 6). Books of Spiritual Knowledge are not to be interpreted by men of worldly learning but by men who by sanctification have attained to a knowledge of God, and to whom the mysteries of the Kingdom of God have been laid bare. As the unwritten Traditional Interpretation of the words of Jesus have been lost to the nations of the West, the only way of restoring the "Spirit" or the true meaning of the words of the Bible is to secure their interpretation by "able ministers" from the East *who are now living, and on whom the effulgence of His grace has been shed.*

They are called in India *Jivanmuktas* (the Liberated Ones) or *Jnánis* (Knowers of God). They are the "anointed" of God. The Western Nations of the world know of only one Christ, but India knows of scores in each generation, busy saving seekers from the perils of atheism and materialism, and leading them to God. May they restore to

Western Nations the "Key of Knowledge" (Luke xi: 52) — the Key *called* Knowledge of God — and interpret truly the teachings of Jesus, and the earlier Sages of Judæa!

CHAPTER IV

ON THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE, OR THE FUNDAMENTAL EXPERIENCES OF THE SANCTIFIED IN SPIRIT

The sanctified in spirit are known in India as *Jnánis* or *Jivanmuktas*.

Their nature described.

Ignorance of Europeans in India of the Esoteric side of Spiritual India.

Difference between teachers of worldly learning, sectarian teachers, and teachers of Truth Eternal (or *Jnánis*).

Where *Jnánis* are to be found in India, and how they are occupied.

Their works called the *Jnána Śástras* (or Guide Books to Perfect Light and Love) intelligible only to the spiritually-minded.

Their doctrines:

Difference between worldly experience and spiritual experience.

The range of the knowable, thinkable, and sensible.

God is knowable directly by the soul, but not thinkable by the mind.

He is *vedyam* (Bhag. Gita, xi: 17), but *aván-manasa gocaram*.

Soul will not know God until it *separates* itself from its impurities.

Their doctrine of renunciation.

"Ascent" of soul towards God.

Attainment of Godliness (*Brâhmi sthiti*).

"Rising" of soul in glory of the sun.

Isolation of Spirit or Aloneness (Kaivalya).

Átma darśana or *Siva darśana*, corresponding to appearance of Christ and knowledge of God.

The "melting of the elements," or realisation in spiritual communion of the "burning up" of the bonds of worldliness.
The "end of the world."
Cessation of the recognition of differentiated existence.
"Death" of the worldly spirit and "birth" of the Godly spirit.
Meaning of the formula "Know the soul through the soul."
Knowledge of God dependent on "separation" or "freeing" (in spiritual communion) of the soul from the sensibilities induced by the excitations of the senses and mind.
The difficulties of Western Psychologists.
The answer of the *Jnánis*.
Four degrees of Sanctification, or death unto the world.
The position of Jesus in the class of *Brahmavid*.
Inappropriate translation of the expression *monogenès huios* in regard to Christ. It means alone-become Son, not only-begotten.
Jesus and St. Paul on attainment of Christhood.
The practice of the art of knowing the soul by the soul.
Attainment of the "fulness" or "freedom" of the soul.
Unspeakable repose or Peace of the soul.

Reality of the Kingdom of God.
The teachings in the *Vedas* and *Agamas*.
Vedánta and *Saiva Siddhánta* expositions.
Nature of religions.

THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE OR THE FUNDAMENTAL EXPERIENCES OF THE SANCTIFIED IN SPIRIT

In India those who have the "Key" called "Knowledge of God" are known as *Jnánis*, or Knowers of the Truth or Wisdom; and the Light, Wisdom, or Knowledge they possess is *Jnánam*. They are also called *Jivanmuktas*, or the Freed Ones, freed from bondage to folly or corruption or ignorance. Other men are not of the Truth. Being attached to the false shows and pleasures of the world they are *a-Jnánis*, unwise men, men in darkness, whose knowledge is foolishness (*a-Jnánam*), because it makes them to think that the Body is the Self or Ego that knows; to believe that the only happiness available to man is through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching, or

through thinking and speaking of things past, present, or yet to come; to mistake the world for the goal to which it is the appointed way; and to rest assured that nothing exists beyond the plane of thought and the senses. In their ignorance they esteem as folly the long-suffering humility of the *Jnánis;* their love of all beings, great and small, good or bad; their inability to hate, and unwillingness to exact satisfaction for wrong done; their sense of thankfulness under all conditions; their refusal to judge others; their want of concern for the morrow, and their disregard for things deeply valued by the multitude. But the more enlightened of the *a-Jnánis* of India, who form a small fraction of the two hundred and fifty millions of Hindus who inhabit the country, feel drawn to the *Jnánis*, and it is to them they have always gone, from the remotest times to the present day, when craving for Light.

Europeans in India know something of the exoteric or outer side of spiritual India,

as exemplified in the symbolic worship carried on in the temples, but almost nothing of its esoteric or inner side. The vast majority of the natives themselves are ignorant of its existence, though many an exegesis is to be found, especially in Sanskrit and Tamil. Such works, however, are difficult to understand; and devotees who have been initiated into the subjective (esoteric) form of worship, — "worship in truth and in spirit" — are unobtrusive and far from communicative. But yet earnest seekers, who fail to find satisfaction in the objective (exoteric) method, soon discover that this system, which no longer appeals to them, is really intended as a stepping-stone to the subjective (esoteric), and that the key of the latter is in the hands of the *Jnána-guru* or Teacher of Godly Wisdom, otherwise called Knowledge of God. Tired of the so-called enjoyments of the world and thirsting for the sanctification of the spirit, they go in quest of him, crying to him now, as in days of yore, "O saint, teach thou, for thou art

the way, and there is no other for us;" "O saint, thou art my way, thou art my way" (*Maitráyana Brahmana Upanishad*, translated by Max Müller, in the fifteenth volume of "The Sacred Books of the East," pp. 290, 299). Occasionally, the saint comes to the very door of the seeker.

Of all teachers, the *Jnána-guru* is acknowledged to be the greatest. Unlike the *Vidyá-guru*, who imparts knowledge on any given secular subject; unlike the *Samaya-guru*, who imparts knowledge on any given religion, the *Jnána-guru* is concerned with the very foundation of knowledge, with Truth eternal, unchangeable. He is therefore a teacher of teachers, a *guru* in the real sense of the term, and hence called a *Jagat-guru*, or *Loka-guru*, a Preceptor or Light of the world.

He is found mostly in secluded places from Cashmere (*Kashmir*) to Cape Comorin (*Kumari*) living in the utmost simplicity. Some are so dead to the world as to go wholly unclad, seeing nothing but the reign of God

everywhere. To them (and indeed every other *Jnáni*), men, women, and children are all alike without any distinction whatever of sex, age, color, creed, or race. Some *Jnánis* are often mighty in attainments (*Siddhis*), but power by itself is not considered their distinguishing characteristic. What are called miracles are often performed by men who are not in fellowship with God, and who therefore misuse the powers entrusted to them. The truth is that God is the author of all forms of power, and He alone is the worker of all miracles, from the making of a mineral cell and the growing of a blade of grass to the suspension of myriads of stellar systems in space. Jesus always declared miracles to be God's works and not his own, and he condemned the display of the gifts of prophecy and miracle on the part of those who did not know God as works of iniquity (Matt. vii: 22). Knowledge of God and the consequent restfulness of spirit, called the Peace that transcends all thought, is indeed the only characteristic of *Jnánis*.

Many of them are well known and much resorted to for instruction and advice; others, undiscovered, perform worldly duties in different walks of life, like ordinary folk; but ripe souls are drawn to them and learn of them in secret the way to God. These *Jnánis* in domestic life make the kindliest and best of fathers, husbands, brothers, and citizens, though never so entangled in those relations as to forget for a moment the grace of God, which assigned to them and others their respective spheres in life for freedom.

It is such masters, who have attained fulness in love and Godly knowledge, that demonstrate to seekers in India that *God can be known by man*, while on earth and in the body. Sound doctrine is necessary to disestablish the mind from sensuous objects and establish it in the spirit, and then many an arduous work, having in view the development of righteousness and perfect love, should be undertaken. For mere study of the principles relating to God, soul, and the world will not and cannot secure for the

student actual knowledge of God. What he reads in books or hears from living lips is, so far as he is concerned, only hearsay knowledge. What is needed is personal knowledge.

According to the *Jnánis*, beings and states of beings complete the range of the knowable. The knower of all these is the soul. It knows some of them through the senses, and some through the mind which draws inferences; and some it knows directly without the aid of either the senses or the mind. The first and second kinds of knowledge are knowledge of objects of sense and of mind, and together constitute *worldly* experience; but the third kind of knowledge is knowledge of the soul or spirit and God, and is *spiritual* experience. The *Jnánis* teach that the sensible and thinkable things are all of nature (*prakriti*) or "flesh" or cosmic stuff, but that God, who is the evolver of nature, mental and material, is not graspable by the senses or mind, but knowable only by the Soul, which is itself spirit, like God. Their

expressive saying is, God is *vedyam* (Bhag. Gita, xi: 17) the knowable, but *avánmanasa gocaram*, inexpressible and unthinkable. Just as the milk of the cow, which pervades her lymphatic system, is drawable only at the teat, *Jnánis* say that God, who is Spirit, Love, and Light, though existent everywhere, is knowable only in that part of his temple called the Spirit or Soul; that souls in bondage to Folly or Corruption (*Avidya*) are like pure water mixed with ink, unable to see itself as something different from the corruption it is in; that the Soul is the being which loves and knows; and Folly the false being which hates and works lawless deeds through the instruments of the Soul, namely, the mind, the senses, and the faculties of speech and action; and that if measures be taken to *separate* the Soul from Folly, the Soul will first know itself and then God who is in it. Knowledge of God is impossible till the Soul *renounces* all its impurities and stands in the likeness or "image" of God fit for fellowship with God. The Doctrine of

Renunciation, and the practices necessary for *forsaking* corruption, form the sum and substance of the teaching of the *Ǵnánis*. This work of renunciation of impurity on the part of the disciple must be carried on from day to day, it may be for years together, before God manifests Himself to the seeking Soul.

When it awakens to a sense of its bondage to corruption and gradually releases itself from its carnal attachments, it is said to "ascend" towards God, who is in the soul. That part of the Vedas which is called *Upanishad* treats of this "ascent" or "rise" from corruption to incorruption. "He who in perfect rest *rises* from worldly attachments and attains the highest light, comes forth *in his own proper form*. This is the immortal soul" (*Maitr. Brah. Up.*, 11–12). Numberless are the books written by *Ǵnánis* to expound this doctrine of Godliness (*Bráhmi sthiti*) contained in the Vedas and Ágamas. The oldest of these books are in Sanskrit and Tamil. Some in Sanskrit are

known to Western scholars, but not any in Tamil. Their works in Tamil deserve to be studied, especially those in the form of hymns. One of the ancient psalms of Mánikka-vásakar, daily chanted by hundreds of thousands of Tamils in South India and Ceylon, is as follows: —

> "O Śiva, abiding in the limitless region of holiness, who, darkness dispelled, has granted me grace this day;
>
> To abate thoughts, I thought of Thy way of *rising* from the bosom of the soul in the glory of the sun;
>
> I thought of the non-existence of everything but Thyself;
>
> I thought of Thee and Thee only, — having worn off thought, atom by atom, and drawing closer for union with Thee as one;
>
> Nothing art Thou, yet nothing is without Thee.
>
> Who, then, can think of Thee?"
>
> — Tiruvásakam, *Koyil Tiruppadikam*, 7.

God as Absolute Being, or Being Unconditioned by quality or quantity, is indeed unthinkable, nor is he to be perceived by the senses, as Immaculate, Infinite Spirit, but yet, as such, he is knowable. He is to be

known by the soul only when the mind runs down to a calm and lies quite still. When in spiritual communion thoughts are wholly abated and sleep does not intervene, the soul stands by itself like a steady flame, unobscured by sleep and unagitated by thought. In this state of isolation or aloneness, called *kaivalya*, the soul knows itself and God who is in it. The gradual elimination of thought "atom by atom," as the Master quoted above says, draws the soul out from the dust heap of thought and enables it to see itself more and more, till at length, when the last trace of thought is "worn off," the soul appears, as declared in the Maitráyana Upanishad, in its "own proper form" as Unconditioned Being, in unspeakable repose. This is called by the *Agamic* Jnánis *átma-darśana*, or knowledge of the soul, corresponding to the "manifestation" or "appearance" of Christ within man (John xiv: 21; Matt. xxiv: 30). Then is realised *Śiva-darśana*, or knowledge of God, who manifests himself only within the Spirit though He

pervades all the Universe. This is "His way," His usual method, of manifesting Himself to those men who worship Him spiritually, "in truth and in spirit," as Jesus said. The *Vedánta Jnánis* speak of these two experiences as *Vikalpa Samádhi* and *Nirvikalpa Samádhi.*

Just as the soul enshrined in the body "rises" from the body, God enshrined in the Soul "rises" from the Soul and manifests himself to the Soul. These are the two *fundamental experiences* of human nature, the one leading necessarily to the other; and this is the goal of life — the knowledge of God. After attaining it, there is nothing more to attain here or elsewhere. Progress with all its toils ends. The long sought for Rest has come. No longer do pure and impure thoughts strive against each other for mastery; no longer do kind and unkind words flow alternately from the lips; no longer does the flesh strive against the Spirit, nor the Spirit against the flesh. Differentiation between oneself and others has ceased.

Peace reigns. In the consuming fire of Truth (*Ǧnánágni*), all the beggarly elements of egotism and desire have been burnt, and infinite Bliss (*ánanda*) survives, bearing witness to the Godly nature of man's consciousness (*átmá*).

> Thou art the indestructible Bliss, which appears the instant all the world (*Jagat*) of thought and the senses, like nuggets of gold, is dissolved into an ocean without waves or current.
>
> To this day I have not thus realised Thee!
>
> Can I attain this happiness by only singing Thy praises in verse?
>
> When, O Lord, wilt Thou establish me in the region of holiness and grant me, a sinner, the bliss of the state resulting from non-differentiation? — Táyumánavar, *Panmálai*, 9.

The "dissolution" of the "world" (*Ǧagat*), which occurs to each man as soon as his mind ceases to differentiate, — as soon as all thoughts have run down to a perfect calm, — is also known as the "death" of the much mistaken *Ǧiva-ahankára* (or worldly spirit) which veils the true Ego (*parama-ahan-*

kára), which alone knows itself and is the basis of all knowledge, temporal and spiritual. Another great Sage of South India, who lived about two thousand years ago, and whose psalms are on the lips of every cultured Tamil of the present day, well said,

> I became like the dead:
> Of all thought was I void:
> None but I remained:
> I knew no further change.
>
> —Venkádar, *Arut-pulambal*, 49.

The Master means to say that when the *Jiva-ahankára* (or worldly-minded I) dissolved itself by non-differentiation, the *parama-ahankára* (or Divine I) stood forth unchangeable, liberated from nescience or worldliness, and hence known as *Jivanmukta*. Another Sage sang as follows, —

> My heart has hardly throbbed for thee;
> But little have my thoughts dissolved;
> Divorced I am not from the body, so hard to separate.
> I have not died: I am still in a whirl.

The "I" that ought to die is the earth-bound or worldly I, that knows not its true status and is therefore led captive by worldly thoughts. The true Ego (or *Átmá*) can never die. It is eternal.

The death of the worldly or sinning I (*Jiva-ahankára*) is the "crucifixion" of the sinner, — the "old Adam." When old Adam is crucified, the heaven-born Adam, the Son of God, the true Ego (*parama-ahankára*) appears (I Cor. xv: 45, 47).

The words "world" (*Jagat*) and "worldly I" denote differentiated existence. The sum of human affairs and interests, or, in a restricted sense, that portion of them which is known to any one, is popularly understood to be the "world," which in truth consists of names and forms only; and the worldly I exists only when one is conscious of differentiated names and forms, that is, of thoughts. The "end or dissolution of the world" (*náma-rupa-nása*) is thus another expression for the "death" of the worldly I. The "world" dissolving or ending is the

same as the worldly I "dying;" and the "death" of the "worldly I" is the same as the "end" of the "world." These expressions denote cessation from differentiation in spiritual communion. When sitting for worship one is alive to the reports of the senses or is thinking of the things of flesh or worldly life, he is in the state of differentiation, which is the opposite of Unification, or Peace, or Rest.

The "world," in the language of Sages, means everything except pure consciousness; means not only the material universe, but also mind and its products called thoughts, and the senses and objects perceived by them. And God, as Being True or Unchangeable, and the Being who pervades this everchanging and therefore untrue "world," cannot be *found* in the face of the world. Since He is its substrate He will not reveal Himself, in His own true character as Absolute Being, if looked for in the "world." Well has a Master sung, —

O Thou who in all things dost vibrate!
O Thou stainless consumer and container of the World!
O Thou king of the celestial hosts!
O Thou the only one, without a second!
Though, appealing to Thee aloud, I have sought for Thee throughout the world (*loka*),
Yet I have not found Thee there.

— Tiruvásakam, *Arutpattu*, 2.

In His own true nature, as He was before the beginning of the "world," and will be after its end, He is to be "seen" (that is, known) only where the "world" is not, that is, only in the reign of pure consciousness. Therefore the Master, who declared that God was *not* to be found in the "world," proclaimed also that he *found* Him elsewhere, in "resplendent Tillai" or the region of pure consciousness or *átmá*:

I found Thee, immaculate and blissful, in resplendent Tillai,
Having overcome the darkness of desire,
The perception of forms, and the thoughts of "I" and "Mine;"
I, who had been drawn into the vortex of caste, family and birth, who was worse than a helpless dog; —

I saw Thee, who had cut away my bonds of misery
and held me to Thy service.
— *ib. Kandapattu*, 5. (The ten hymns attesting
knowledge.)

This immaculate and formless being of the Deity "seen" beyond the veil of thought, in the region of pure consciousness, is His unthinkable form, *nishkala svarupa*. His *sakala svarupa* or thought-form, assumed for purposes of grace, is according to the *form in which He has been thought of* by the earnest devotee.

The separation of the soul from thought and sense impression is known in spiritual communion as separation from the *body* or the *flesh*, as attested by the words of the great Sendanár:

Meditating on the peerless ways in which He led
me captive,
Having separated me from the *Body*,
Which knows not what it is to be established;
Meditating also on the gracious manner in which He
cherishes the faithful;
Let me sing in praise of Him only who took me unto
Himself, etc.

— Sendanár, *Tiru-pallându*, 3.

Another Master sings, —

Hear, O Bird, dwelling in groves laden with luscious fruit!
Raise thy notes to the Giver of all things,
Who, spurning the celestial regions, appeared on earth for the purpose of claiming man as His subject.
Pray that the King may come, who spurning the *flesh* entered my soul, made it like Himself and stood forth the only One.

— Tiruvásakam, *Kuyilpattu*, 4.

"The flesh" or "body" includes not only the tangible body (*sthula śarira*), but also the subtle body (*sukshma śarira*) consisting of those invisible instruments of knowledge and action which are found to function in various parts of the tangible body. The complete "spurning of the flesh," therefore, means complete isolation from the flesh, which state is also spoken of as being wholly "dead to the world" (of thought and the senses). When this occurs, the soul becomes *nishkala*, immaculate (unspotted by the least rudiments of the flesh), godlike. Drawing the soul from the mind-sheath (*kosha*) or

womb (*garbha*) in which it has been encased, God "frees" or "separates" it from its carnal bonds and causes it to be "as Himself." Compare the words of St. Paul, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal the Son in me," etc., Gal. i: 15. This separation from the limitations of the mind is essential to the spiritual birth of the Son or Soul (*átmá*). Then only does He, who from eternity lay hidden in the Soul, become manifest; and manifested, He absorbs the soul by His sun-like glory and remains "the Only One."

All the doctrines and practices which are calculated to lead to the knowledge of the soul, and through that knowledge to the knowledge of God, are locked up in the mystic formula *átmánam átmaná paśya* (know the soul through the soul), which in the language of Jesus is represented by the expression, "I (the Spirit) bear witness of myself (the Spirit)" (John viii: 18).

It is necessary to try and understand in

modern modes of thought the truths that lie embedded in these most holy formulas. In the darkness of deep sleep Consciousness is so obscured that it knows nothing, not even its own existence. When it first awakes it knows nothing in particular till a vague desire to know arises within it, and sets the mind to think, or the senses to perceive, something. Then begins a knowledge of some definite thing. But so rapidly do the senses strike on the Consciousness, and so constantly do thoughts present themselves from the moment it wakes to the moment it falls asleep, that Consciousness is "cheated with the blear illusion" that it is identical with the body. The truth, however, as experienced by *Jnánis*, is that Consciousness (or the Knower, or the Soul) is wholly distinct from the mind (which thinks) and the senses, just as the latter are distinct from the body. "Separate from the mind and the senses, yet reflecting the qualities of all of them, the *átmá* (soul) is the Lord and Ruler of all" (*Svetasvatara Upanishad*, iii: 17).

Consciousness or the Soul knows the senses and the mind, but they are not subtle enough to know the Soul, their "Lord and Ruler." It knows itself. Nothing else can know it. Hence the mandate, "know the soul through the soul." The soul is a witness (*sákshi*) unto itself. The mind (including the reason) and the senses, being constructed of cosmic stuff or "flesh," cannot know the soul!

It is difficult to establish these truths by reasoning, for the basis of reasoning is comparison of one thing with another and drawing inferences therefrom, and there is nothing in the world without us which may be compared with the soul within. The only *proof* possible in these circumstances is an appeal to the *spiritual experience* or actual knowledge of the Spirit of the class of people called *Jnánis*. Their experience declares (1) that the body is the tabernacle of the Soul and its instruments; (2) that the mind (or the subtle organs of thought) and the senses are the instruments of the Soul, whereby the Soul is brought into relation with the

objective world; (3) that the mind is not subtle enough to know the Soul; (4) that the Soul may be freed from its primeval taint of evil or worldliness; (5) that when freed from evil or worldliness the soul knows itself as naturally as the bound soul knows the mind and the world without; and (6) that peace (or infinite love, irrespective of objects of love) and knowledge (or power of knowing, irrespective of objects of knowledge) are the fundamental features of the freed soul.

How few among us recognise even the first named of these truths! Metaphysicians of repute have argued that the mind, so far from using the body as its instrument, is only a property, power, or function of the body. Professor Bain, desiring to follow a middle course, defines man to be "an extended and material mass, attached to which is the power of becoming alive to feeling and thought, the extreme remove from all that is material" (*Mind and Body*, p. 137); and observes that the contention that the mind uses the body as its instrument "assumes

for mind a separate existence, a power of living apart, an option of working with or without a body. Actuated by the desire of making itself known, and of playing a part in the sphere of matter, the mind uses its bodily ally to gratify this desire; but if it chose to be self-contained, to live satisfied with its own contemplations, like the gods as conceived by Aristotle, it need not enter into coöperation with any physical process, with brain, senses, or muscular organs. I will not reiterate the groundlessness of this supposition. The physical alliance is the very law of our mental being; it is not contrived purely for the purpose of making our mental states known; without it we should not have mental states at all" (ib., p. 132).

The learned Professor's criticisms abound with difficulties of his own creation, which however do not affect the truths of spiritual experience. By the light of this experience, the Soul (or the I that knows) is found to be very different from the mind whose function is to think. It will be readily admitted

that it is not the senses (*Jnanendriyas*) but the internal faculties of thought (*antahkaranas*) that think. The *Jnánis* declare that the invisible organ of thought and the other invisible organs of breath, nutrition, and action, which in co-relation form the subtle body (*sukshma śarira*) of the soul and function in different parts of the tangible body, are in the nature of a covering or sheath (*kosha*) of the soul, being "bound" to it by the "worldliness" or folly inherent in the soul (*Jivátma*). From olden times, they say, the soul (*Jivátma*) was permeated with this feeling of want and craving and lay in a stifled condition. For the merciful purpose of liberating the soul from this pitifully obscured condition, God evolved the world out of worldly rudiments and endowed the soul, firstly, with the "mind-and-breath mechanism" called the subtle body, and secondly, with the tangible body as the mud-home of the subtle body, and so brought it into relation with the outer world. The craving or greed for gratification thus became

(through the "subtle body") the desires of touch, taste, hearing, sight, and smell, and the desires of the intellect. The mind-and-breath organism has, therefore, been called a "lamp," or instrument of illumination to the obscured soul. When the light of true knowledge, let into the soul through the channels of the mind and the senses, dispels by degrees the density of the worldly taint or ignorance inherent in the soul, the mind and the senses find less and less enjoyment in the field of carnality. It is within our every-day experience that, with the gradual decline of desire for anything, our thoughts on that subject become fewer and less active, and it is only natural that when all desires are eschewed, thoughts should run down to a complete calm. This truth is expressed in the formula *nirásá* (or *non desire*) is *samádhi* (peace). All "enlightened" men, that is, men consciously admitting light and thus actively wearing off, atom by atom, the density of their cravings, are on the high road to *samádhi*. They are destined

to speedily enter the spiritual kingdom, the holy and blissful region of pure consciousness.

The converse proposition, that the practice of the art of pacifying thoughts leads to attainment of *nirásá*, that is, emancipation from desire, is found to be equally true. Without tarrying on this part of the subject it is needful only to say that, as the effacement of all desire causes thought to disappear, leaving the soul serene and limitlessly conscious, Mr. Bain's question whether the mind may have a separate existence, and in that state of independence possess an option of working with or without the body, admits of a ready answer. If all desires have been permanently expunged from the soul, the mind becomes quite inactive and has no power over the body.

Such a contingency occurs only in the case of that class of *Jnánis* known as *Brahmavarishta*, who by unceasing spiritual communion have isolated themselves from desire so completely that it never rises from

the expanse of consciousness in any form whatever. The only indications that they are not dead are warmth in the body and growth of hair and nails, if clipped. The senses do not perceive, the mind does not think, in this state. Though dead in the worldly sense, they are not dead spiritually. They live on from year to year without food or drink.

A less advanced *Jnáni* is the *Brahma Variyán*, in whom desire is not completely annihilated. Therefore he is able to rest in *Samádhi* only for limited periods, emerging therefrom for a short while, during which devotees revive his recollection of earthly affairs and pray for blessings. Granting them, he again relapses into the peaceful state. The late Rájá Rájendralála Mitra, one of the most distinguished sons of India, said that in 1842 he saw a *Jnáni* whom some wood-choppers had brought up to Calcutta from the forests of the Sunderbunds. The saint was found sitting cross-legged under a lofty banian tree, amidst a wild profusion

of heavy roots, which in course of growth had entwined themselves round his limbs. The "fools and blind" cleared the wood and carried the Sage, dead as he was to the world, to Calcutta, where he was taken possession of by two men even more ignorant than the wood-choppers, for unable to rouse him "by shouting, pushing, and beating, they put fire into his hand and plunged him into deep water in the Ganges with a rope about his neck, as though he were a ship's anchor, and twice kept him there all night. They pried his tetanus jaws apart, put beef into his mouth, and poured brandy down his throat. Finally, to prove their own shamelessness, and to make their memory hateful for ever, this Hindu Rájá and this Englishman set upon the poor saint an abandoned creature of the other sex to pollute him with her unholy touch!" (Colonel Olcott's Lecture at the Town Hall of Calcutta in 1882 on "Theosophy, the Scientific Basis of Religion.") At last by violent methods they awoke him, and all he said was, — "O

Sirs, why did you disturb me? I have done you no harm." Shortly after, he attained *Videha Mukti* or liberation from the *sthula* and *sukshma* bodies.

A third class of *Jnánis* is represented by the *Brahma Varan*, who suspends mind and breath for a few days at a time, returning to the ways of life readily at the close of the *Samadhi*.

By far the largest number of *Jnánis*, however, belong to the class of the *Brahma Vid*, who isolates himself only for a few hours each day, not necessarily every day. These are the saints who are most useful to the world, because all their thoughts run with amazing fruitfulness in the groove of *paropakaram* or service to others. Jesus is a brilliant example of this type, for in addition to knowledge of God, he possessed *siddhis* (or spiritual powers) of a very high order. When drawn too much into the vortex of worldly life he sought solitude for the purpose of reëstablishing himself in the fulness of peace. "He went up into a mountain apart to pray. . . . He was there

alone" (Matt. xiv: 23) is often said of Jesus. He is also said to have been fast asleep on board a ship when a great storm was blowing and covering the craft with tremendous waves (Matt. viii: 24). Even a drunken man would have returned to his sober senses in such rolling and pitching, creaking and roaring, "but Jesus was asleep." He was really in *Samádhi*, "dead to the world" of thought and the senses. His disciples were able to move him out of that peaceful state, only because his desires, still lurking in the soul, stirred and set the mind-and-breath mechanism in motion, as demonstrated in the case of the ill-treated saint of the Sunderbunds. It is a truth worth realising that even the best of desires are, in comparison to Peace, a burden. The blissfulness of Rest is infinitely superior to un-rest, however refined. Rest is absolutely good, and all forms of Un-rest, from the highest, are bad *in relation* to Rest. Therefore did Jesus say on a memorable occasion, feeling the desecration of un-rest, "Why callest thou me good? There is no

one good but one, that is God" (Matt. xix: 16). Therefore also do men who have tasted of that Rest feel ever inclined to go back to it, as to a haven, from the agitations of thought, the troubles and turmoils of life, and to stand alone quite isolated from all that is worldly.

This "alone becoming" of the soul, known in India as *Kaivalya*, is what is indicated by the Greek phrase *monogenēs huios*, in John i: 18, rendered inappropriately in English as "the only-begotten son." How can Jesus Christ be considered the only son of God, when he himself taught the doctrine that others also could be as perfect as God in love (Matt. v: 48), and as gifted as himself in miraculous powers (ib. xvii: 20). It will also be borne in mind that St. Paul said that it was possible for all men by due culture to attain the fulness of Christ (Eph. iv: 13). Nor must it be forgotten that Jesus took pains to expose the popular fallacy that Christ was the son of David (Matt. xxii: 42). "What think ye of Christ?" he asked of the

Pharisees. They said, "He is the son of David." If he be the son of David, said Jesus, how is it that David addresses him as Lord in Ps. cxi? Is it customary for a father to call his son Lord? They answered not a word, and verse 46 records "neither durst any man from that day forward ask him any more questions." Jesus meant to say that, though flesh was necessary to produce flesh, Christ was not flesh, and Christ, being pure Spirit, did not need a fleshly father like David to beget him. He expressly said that Christ was "before Abraham" (John viii: 58), who lived many centuries before David. Christ is the Soul that has been freed from its bondage to worldliness, and blessed with the knowledge of God. "Truth (or grace of God) shall make you free," said Jesus (John viii: 32). "Sanctify them through thy Truth," he cried (John xvii: 17), even as he himself was sanctified (John x: 36). To stand alone, quite isolated from all that is worldly, is *Śánti* in Sanskrit, from which Sanctification comes.

The experiences of *Jnánis* of the different degrees of Rest or "death unto the world," as above described, ought to make it clear to "learned philosophers" that the mind and the senses are but instruments of the soul, and that, if desire were wholly eliminated from the soul, the mind and the sense organs would fall prostrate on the bosom of the soul, even as a spinning top falls on the ground as soon as its force is exhausted. This is one of the most certain facts known in *Samádhi*,

When the mind, ceasing to whirl, falls like a top
which has spent its force, —
Just then, the gloom of ignorance dispelled,
Did I know myself, independent, like unto space,
devoid of light and shade?
Did I then, joining myself with the Infinite Peace
which lies within me, pass into the transcend-
ingly blissful state?
— Táyumánavar, *Tejomayánandam*, 4.

A few more words may be added in explanation of *átmánam átmaná paśya*. We know, as a fact, that we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell; and we know also that we

think. The expressions, "I know that I feel," "I know that I desire," "I know that I think," mean only that one is conscious of those states of being, — namely, the states of feeling, of desiring, of thinking. *Consciousness*, therefore, is the *Be-ing which knows*, and must not be confounded with the states or sensibilities induced in consciousness through the excitation of the senses and thoughts. When such sensibilities are discarded what remains is consciousness pure, which soon overflows in all directions, boundlessly, like the rays of the sun through space. This experience is known as *átmá pūrana*, meaning literally, in the words of St. Paul, the fulness of the spirit. This is the liberated soul (*átmá* in *moksha*), the Be-ing, the "I am," which partakes of the "glory" of God: known as *Saććidánanda*, that is, *sat*, eternal unchangeable existence; *ćit*, pure consciousness, infinitely expanded; *ánanda*, bliss or absolute peace. In plain words, when consciousness is purified to the requisite degree, it is found as a matter of

fact (1) to survive all phenomena and remain unchangeable; (2) to possess the knowledge that is not limited by time or place; and (3) to overflow with an unspeakable repose and love for all living beings, the like of which is unknown in any other state.

European science admits the world of the senses (the "sensible" world, as it is called), and the world of thought (the "extra-sensible" world), and is quite familiar with their laws and conditions; but it refuses to acknowledge the world — I would rather say, the region — of pure consciousness (the "supra-sensible" world). "We cannot say," wrote the late Mr. G. H. Lewes, "that a supra-sensible world is impossible; we can only say that, if it exists, it is to us inaccessible" (*Problems of Life and Mind*, Vol. I, p. 270). And Professor Bain declares that in the senses and thoughts "we have an alphabet of the knowable, . . . but we cannot by any effort pass out of the compass of the primitive sensibilities" (Sec. 19 of the chapter on the Physiological Data of Logic).

The denial of the region of pure consciousness (the *Jnána Bhumi*), because of its fancied inaccessibility to experience, is a notoriously false argument, Mr. Lewes himself having pointed out elsewhere that, "before a fact could be discredited by its variance from one's notion, the absolute accuracy of the notion itself needed demonstration" (*Problems, etc.*, i: 353).

No further emphasis is now required to bring home the fact that the existence of the region of pure consciousness is not a matter of theory or speculation. This state of "godliness" is indeed a "mystery" (as attested by St. Paul in I Tim. iii: 16), in the sense of being beyond human comprehension *until it is explained and realised.* It is within the actual experience (*Svánubhava*) of *Jnánis*, and is known to them as *Bráhmi sthiti*, or *Śiva-loka*, or *chitambara*, or *chitákása*, the blessed state, the spiritual kingdom, the Kingdom of God, the reign of infinite consciousness or light. It is the most real of all regions, because when it is reached it is found

to be further irresolvable, hence unchangeable, that is, everlasting. It is, moreover, strictly verifiable in experience, that is, attainable by others, provided that, by native disposition and previous culture, one is sympathetic enough to persevere in all earnestness and faith in the way marked by the Master.

When this state is attained, then will be realised in actual experience the truth that God is in the soul. Upon this spiritual experience is founded the doctrine of "God in me, and I in God."

Both the *Vedas* and *Agamas* teach this doctrine in those parts of them which are called *Ǧnána Khánda* (the section that relates to spiritual enlightenment).

The *Ágamas* are a graduated elaboration of the four *Vedas*, and are known as the fifth *Veda*. The final or eternal truths relating to God, having been revealed to the *Ǧnánis*, the way of attaining God has been worked out in the *Ágamas* under four principal stages known as *charya* (good conduct), *kriyá* (symbolical worship), *yoga* (subjective union

through sense control, breath control, and thought control), and *jnána* (hearing and understanding the principles of eternal life). The *charya* stage is called *san-márga*, or the good way of lawful or ethical conduct, in which God is distantly or vaguely conceived; the *kriyá* stage is *dása márga*, or the way of the servant, in which God is conceived as Master or King; the *yoga* stage is *putra márga*, or the way of the son, in which God is viewed as Father; and the *jnána* stage is *saha márga*, or the way of the friend and equal, in which Soul is considered to be striving for fellowship with God.

The final or eternal truths are known in the *Vedas* as *Vedánta* and in the *Ágamas* as *Śaiva Siddhánta*, and the entire graduated way is known as *soupana márga* (ladder way, or path of ascent).

Agreeably to the needs and capacities of each people, have *Religions* or *Bonds of Spiritual Thought* been given them, marked by some one or more of the features of the stages above named. Some religions do not

carry their votaries beyond the stage of ethical conduct; others not beyond ritual worship; very few teach subjective union; and only one at the present day is able to impart a full knowledge of those principles and practices which result in the actual attainment of God. As spiritual thought gets mixed with error in the progress of years, owing to the imperfections of the minds of those who receive and give out such thought, religions become materialised and intolerant of each other. Hence come diversities and conflicts. Such religions perish with the people who have perverted the original germs of truth.

It matters not in what land or sphere of society a man is born if in humble spirit he acts up to the faith he was born in. In due time he will be moved to a higher form of faith, and so onward from one life to another, till all his thoughts get centred in God. Life and death are like waking and sleeping. As the same being that is awake sleeps and wakes again, so he that lives dies, to live again on earth till full knowledge of God is attained.

CHAPTER V

ON THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS OF ANCIENT JUDÆA

The relation of the Judaic Way to the teachings of the *Jnánis* of India, and of Jesus and his Apostles.
Manifestation of God to Abraham.
The gift of the Law to Moses.
Path of righteousness.
The reward of obedience.
Punishment for wandering from the law.
Offerings for forgiveness.
Sanctification by atonement.
The times of the Judges (B.C. 1400–1200).
Decline of the Priesthood.
Samuel's School of the Prophets.
The spiritual doctrine of the prophets.
The Sadducees and Pharisees.
Their beliefs.
Writings of Philo and Josephus.
Doctrine of Transmigration of Souls.
Popular belief as to General Resurrection of the Dead.
Ignorance of the Jewish Priesthood.
Captivity of the people in Chaldæa.
Prophet Ezekiel in Babylon (587 B.C.).
Purport of his Vision of the Dry Bones.
Necessity of separating the belief of the multitude from the teaching of Ezekiel and Daniel.
Popular belief as to the Coming of the Messiah.
Fusion of the two popular beliefs.
The Essenes.
Their beliefs, according to Philo and Josephus.
Jesus supposed by some to be an Essene.

The three orders of Judaism represent each a stage in the Way to the Goal, which is God.

The Sadducees and Pharisees espoused the shell or exoteric phase of Judaism, and the Essenes its inner kernel.

The expression "The Law and the Prophets" intended to denote this distinction between outer and inner worship.

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS OF ANCIENT JUDAEA

Let us now consider the Judaic Way, so as to see what relation its teachings bear on the one hand to those of the *Jnánis* of India, and on the other to those of Jesus, Paul, and other Christian Saints.

It is said that when the early ancestors of the Jews were dwelling on the eastern side of the Euphrates and were serving inferior gods, the all-powerful God called on Abraham to leave the land of his fathers and proceed to Canaan, saying, "I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. xii: 2, 3). Known in later times as the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exod. iii: 6) — the god whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshipped with full acceptance — He revealed Himself to their descendant Moses

on Mount Horeb, as *Yáveh* (Jehovah, the self-existent). *Ehyeh ashar Ehyeh* (I am what I am) was the name which He vouchsafed of Himself to Moses (ib. iii: 14) — the *Aham* of the *Jnánis*, a name for Pure Spirit. He also declared, "I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name of *El Shadai* (the all-powerful, corresponding to *Iśvara*), but by my name I. H. V. H. (Jehovah, self-existent, corresponding to *Svayambhur* of the *Jnánis*) was I not known to them. And I have also established my Covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan (Region of Peace), the land of their pilgrimage wherein they were strangers" (Exod. vi: 3–4).

The manifestation to Moses at Mount Horeb was followed by the grant of the Law at Mount Sinai for the instruction of his people. Jehovah said unto Moses, "Come up to me unto the Mount and be there, and I will give thee Tables of stone and the Law (*thorah*), even the Commandments" (Exod. xxiv: 12) or the Word of God (I John. ii: 7),

and He gave unto him "two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exod. xxxi: 18), in order that by observance of the Law they might progress in the pilgrimage to Peace, otherwise called Canaan.

According to the Law thus delivered, Wickedness or Sin consisted of wandering from the Law to the right or to the left (Josh. i: 7) — going off from the path of Righteousness — and was punishable with divers forms of sorrow, including disease and death (Levit. xxvi: 14–41, Exod. xxxii: 33). Obedience to the Law, or Uprightness of Spirit, was rewarded with joys, such as, abundant harvest, deliverance from misfortune, and conquest of enemies (Lev. xxvi: 3–12).

Offerings to God for the purpose of obtaining His forgiveness formed a most important part of the Tradition of Moses. As sins are committed in ignorance or forgetfulness of the existence and power of God, an offering at His temple would indicate an acknowledgment

of Him, a desire to avoid punishment hereafter. It was therefore enjoined on Jews that there should be a "sin-offering" in expiation of the sin and preparatory to access to God; then a "burnt-offering" as symbolical of the offending mind and body burnt and surrendered to God; and lastly a "meat-offering" by way of thanksgiving. The offerer brought the sin-offering, a young bullock, to the door of the tabernacle, laid his hand upon the head of the animal, in token of the victim standing for him and bearing the burden of his guilt, and killed it before the Lord. Thereupon the priest dipped a finger in the blood of the victim and sprinkled it seven times before the veil of the sanctuary, — the "holy place within the veil," where the seat of mercy was (Levit. xvi: 2) — putting some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense, and throwing the rest at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering. The fat of the animal was also collected from certain parts of the body and burnt upon the altar. The

"burnt-offering," which might be the male of the herd, or of the flock, or of the fowls, was similarly dealt with, but the priest burnt the whole of the victim on the altar, and being an offering made by fire, it was "of a sweet savour unto the Lord." The priest was then commanded to "*make an atonement*" for him as regards his sin, and said the Lord, "it shall be forgiven" (Lev. iv: 26). "Ye shall keep my statutes (laws) and do them," that is, Ye shall bear in mind my words, and act according to them, for "I am the Lord which sanctify you" (Lev. xx: 8), meaning, none of the inferior gods hitherto worshipped have the power of healing you of corruption; only I can. Therefore, "Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy" (Lev. xx: 7).

During the time of the Judges (B.C. 1400–1200), the priesthood had sunk into ignorance and corruption, and the people, becoming themselves too worldly and having no means of learning the spirit or inner meaning of the Mosaic creed, came to think of ceremonial observances as ends *per se*, or as

convenient forms of justifying themselves only before the world.

In this state of vain formalism Samuel (B.C. 1150), who had been dedicated to God from infancy in the tabernacle of Shiloh, grew to be a man of deep spiritual insight, so that his fame as a *nábi* or Knower of God spread in the country, and made Shiloh the resort of those who came to consult him. From the gift of prophecy and the position he occupied as Judge, he commanded universal reverence. "Behold!" he declared, "to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken better than rams" (I Sam. xv: 22), that is, heartfelt obedience to whatever has been enjoined by the Law is better than merely carrying offerings to the Temple; and hearing expositions of the Spirit of the Law is better than making sacrifices at the altar. To enlighten his countrymen and wean them from their worldly ways he founded several schools of spiritual instruction, called "The Companies of Prophets" (I Sam. xix: 20), in which the Law and its

proper interpretation were carefully studied, as also sacred poetry, music, and sacred dance. Oral, as distinct from symbolical, teaching was henceforth transferred from the priestly to the prophetic order. The students who graduated in these colleges disseminated the knowledge they possessed according to their opportunities; but actual prophets — that is, those who had the gift of prophecy — held religious *séances* weekly or monthly (as may be gathered from Elisha's life), for the building of the faith of the people. They not only preached morals and religion but also sang and discoursed on history and patriotism. After the establishment of these colleges, prophet after prophet arose, proclaiming the inutility of sacrifices when divorced from inner faith.

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel," said Hosea (B.C. 780), "for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is no truth, no mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.* . . . . As they were increased, so they sinned

against me (iv: 1–7) . . . . They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms (iv: 13). *I desired mercy* and not sacrifice, *and the knowledge of God* more than burnt offerings" (vi: 6).

"Wherewith," said Micah (B.C. 710) "shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and *what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God*" (vi: 6–8).

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord," said Isaiah (B.C. 750). "I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of the bullocks;

or of the lambs or of the goats. . . . Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies . . . and even appointed feasts my soul hateth . . . I am weary to hear them" (i: 11–14).

"Behold! the days come, saith the Lord," said Jeremiah (B.C. 606), "that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."

Ezekiel said (B.C. 580) "saith the Lord God, *repent* and turn yourselves from your transgressions . . . . *make you a new heart and new spirit* (xviii: 30, 31).

It is said that, after the return of the Jews to Jerusalem from Babylon, they gradually became divided into parties or schools, the chief of whom were known as the *Sadducees* and the *Pharisees.*

The Sadducees (*Tsedúkim* the righteous) were strict followers of the written laws of Moses and were drawn from the more opulent and distinguished ranks of Jewish society.

In the supposed absence of a single text in the whole of the Pentateuch referring to rewards and punishments in a future life, they did not believe in such a doctrine or in the resurrection of the dead. They believed that the pains and pleasures experienced in the world were meted out by Jehovah according to each man's works. They therefore endeavoured to observe the written law of Moses in all its severity, without taking advantage of the mitigations introduced under the sanction of the traditions of the Elders and maintained by the Pharisees. The Sadducees believed that Jehovah was in "the heaven of heavens" (Deut. x: 14), served by a few angels (Gen. xix: 1), and attended by myriads of saints (Deut. xxxiii: 2), and that His anger would "burn into the lowest *sheol*" (ib. xxxii: 22) or pit. The Sadducees were part of the aristocracy of the land and were interested in politics.

The Pharisees, whose name meant "Separatists' (*Perúshim*), were the party who are

said to have come into existence sometime after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great, in order to stem the current of Hellenic modes of thought and life which had by degrees flowed into the country since then. Their policy was to conserve the national element not only in politics but also in religion, and they were therefore exceedingly popular. By their austerity they drew into their party the body of the Jewish people. They believed that Moses received an oral law to complete and interpret the written law contained in the Pentateuch; that he delivered the oral law to Joshua, that Joshua delivered it to the Elders, that the Elders delivered it to the Prophets, and the Prophets to the men of the great Synagogue; that the object for which the written law was delivered was attainable all the more easily by interpreting it by the light of the teaching of the Synagogue; that though the general course of matters was pre-ordained, yet man was a free agent in many respects, and that external purity and ceremonial law

were essential to salvation. They therefore regulated their conduct in life by a network of intricate rules as to what was clean and unclean, proper and improper, necessary and unnecessary, with the result that the majority of the Pharisees, who lost sight of the end and aim of all this formalism, became noted for their bigotry, hypocrisy, and pride.

As regards their notions of the soul and a future life *Josephus*, the Pharisee and historian of the Jews, who flourished in the first century of Christ, records that the sect to which he belonged believed that every soul was imperishable, and that, while the souls of good men passed over or migrated into other bodies, those of bad men suffered eternal punishment. *Philo*, the Jewish philosopher, who was a contemporary of Jesus, goes further and declares that all, but those who have known God, must pass into another body.

The fact of the prevalence of a belief on the part of the Jews in the transmigration of souls, or as they called it "the rising from

the dead," is supported by the Scriptures, for when Herod heard of the fame of Jesus he said unto his servants, "this is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him" (Matt. xiv: 2); and we learn that this was not only his own idea, being a Jew, but the common talk in Jewry, some saying that John was risen from the dead, others Elias, and others still one of the old prophets (Luke ix: 7, 8). Furthermore, Jesus himself said of John the Baptist, "this is Elias which was for to come" (Matt. xi: 14); "I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed" (referring to John's imprisonment and execution, Matt. xvii: 12; *cf.* also John i: 21). As the spirit of Elias did not come straight from heaven clad in flesh as John the Baptist, but entered the womb of Elizabeth of Hebron and was clad there with a body in the fulness of time and then received the name of John, it must be admitted that the doctrine of the Trans-

migration of Souls formed part of the Pharisaic creed (to say nothing of the views of Jesus), and that the expression "rising from the dead" meant also transmigration of the soul.

With this doctrine of transmigration or rising anew (*anastasis*) of souls was bound up the belief in the necessity of a sojourn in *sheol*, "the land of darkness and of the shadow of death, without any order" (Job x: 22), in the lower parts of the earth (Ps. lxiii: 9, Prov. xv: 24), to which the "shades" or subtle bodies of both the "just" and the "unjust" souls were consigned, the former to rest in comfort, the latter to writhe in torment. It is recorded that King Saul once desired a woman "with a familiar spirit" to "bring up" Samuel, with the view of learning from him the issue of the war with the Philistines; that responding to the summons of this woman, the shade of the Prophet, "ascending out of the earth" and wrapped in a mantle, approached Saul and said to him, "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring

me up?" and that after declaring to him the course of events, the Prophet concluded with these words: "the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee unto the hand of the Philistines, and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me" (I Sam. xxviii: 11–19) in sheol.

In the case of Lazarus (the brother of Martha), who had been dead and buried four days before Jesus came into Bethany, we find that his spirit was not only summoned presumably from sheol, like Samuel of old, but was made to pass into his corpse and to respond to the call of Jesus, so that "he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin" (John xi: 44). This was spoken of as the *resurrection* of Lazarus, and many people came to see him whom Jesus had *raised from the dead* (ib. xii: 9). The earlier incidents of this resurrection scene prove also the common belief of the times that there was to be a *general* resurrection of the dead *on a particular day.*

When Jesus stepped into Martha's house she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, but I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Jesus saith unto her, "thy brother shall rise again." Martha misunderstanding him replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection *at the last day*" (ib. xi: 21, 24).

The broad features of the Universal Resurrection are supposed to be contained in the following "prophecy" (Rev. i: 3), "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which was the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (ib. xx: 12–15).

This doctrine of the General Resurrection was of all others the most opposed by the

Sadducees. There was no authority whatever for it in the Mosaic Law.

The historical books of the old Testament and the researches of modern scholars show that this doctrine was derived from Babylonian sources.

Conservative as the Jews were, direct and personal as was the government of their God, they went the way of all hearts of flesh, "a-whoring after other gods" (I Chron. v: 25), from the earliest times (Exod. xx: 3; Deut. iv: 19; Judges viii: 33; x: 16); not only after images of wood and metal, trees and high places, but also money, woman, familiar spirits, and other abominations. The decline of the national faith may be said to date from King Solomon (1030 B.C.), who after building the great temple for Jehovah worshipped nevertheless Milcom and Molech, the gods of the Ammonites, Astoreth of the Zidonians, and Chemosh of the Moabites (I Kings xi: 5). Ahaz (B.C. 741) is reported to have "walked in the way of the Kings of Israel, yea, he made his sons to pass through

the fire according to the abomination of the heathen . . . and he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places and on the hills and under every green tree" (II Kings, xvi: 2–4, II Chron. xxviii: 4). The unrighteousness of Israel had already passed into a proverb. "And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built their high places in all their cities . . . and they set them up images . . . and wrought wicked things" (II Kings xvii: 9–12). National ignorance and apostasy had reached their zenith in the reign of Manasseh (B.C. 696–641), who during the fifty years he ruled in Jerusalem reared up altars for Baal and the hosts of heaven, and observed times, as appointed by astrologers, used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards (II Kings xxi: 3–6). The *Mosaic law was violated in all respects. Indeed its very principles were forgotten*, for in Josiah's reign it is recorded that, in the course of repairing the House of the Lord in Jerusalem, a solitary book of the law

was discovered (B.C. 621) among the *débris*, and carried to the King, who hearing the words of the law read rent his clothes and wept at the deep degradation of the people and the priests. He then "sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, and the King went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites and all the people, great and small. And he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the House of the Lord. And the King stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it . . . and Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were

present in Israel to serve the Lord their God. And all his days they departed not from following the Lord" (II Chron. xxxiv: 29–33). Upon his death, however, they relapsed into their old ways, and continued so until they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and marched off (B.C. 599) to Chaldæa, "all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of Salem . . . and craftsmen and smiths. None remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land" (II Kings xxiv: 13, 14).

It was most probably during the captivity that the Jews, in ignorance of their religion, allowed themselves to pass under the dominion of customs and superstitions which were wholly foreign to the Law of Moses. It has been admitted by Mr. Isaac D'Israeli that the Rabbins have no good reason for referring to Moses and Mount Sinai the twelve folios of the Babylonish Talmud or "the Doctrinal," on the authenticity of which such "legends" have found acceptance with the Scribes and Pharisees, whose want of

spiritual discernment Jesus condemned severely (Matt. xxiii: 23).

The first clear mention of the doctrine of the General Resurrection of the Dead in the Old Testament is supposed to occur in the book of Ezekiel (B.C. 587), who was long resident in Babylon, having been taken thither as captive in his twenty-fifth year. Knowing that his countrymen believed in the general resurrection, he appears to have utilised it for the purpose of raising the national faith from the slough of corruption and despondency into which it had fallen. He maintained that the Jews were still the chosen people of the Lord. It was true that the nation with whom the old covenant was made had been driven from the fatherland, its temple and altar destroyed, and its priesthood disbanded; it was true that the "bones" of Israel lay scattered in barbarous countries, intermingled with the bones of the uncircumcised; but yet the covenant of God stood, because the Lord had declared to him that he would clothe "the dry bones"

(or poverty of worldly spirit), of "the dead" (or those who have been dead unto the world and become alive unto the Lord) with "flesh" (or the fulness of spirituality), and lead them back to Israel (or the realm of Peace) in the vigour of (eternal) life. Such was the tenor of Ezekiel's impressive Vision of the Dry Bones, which, be it remembered, was expressed only for the purpose of inculcating a grand spiritual truth, viz., that those who are dead unto the world shall be reborn as sons of God. "The hand of the Lord," he declared, "was upon me and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about, and behold! there were very many in the open valley, and lo! they were very dry. And He said unto me 'Son of man, can these bones live?' And I answered, 'O Lord, thou knowest.' Again He said unto me 'Prophesy upon these bones and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.' Thus saith the Lord God unto these

bones: 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.' So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied there was a noise and behold a shaking, and the dry bones came together, bone to his (its) bone; and when I beheld, lo! the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them. Then said He unto me, 'Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind thus saith the Lord God: 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said unto me, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, our bones are dried and our hope is lost, we are cut off our

parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God: Behold! O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of them and bring you into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves; and I shall put my Spirit in you and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land. Then shall ye know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord'" (xxxvii: 1–14).

The last part of this prophecy beginning with "O my people, I will open your graves," is a good illustration of an allegory within an allegory, for it conveys, in words characteristic of the vulgar doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, a great truth relating to the conversion or Regeneration of the Spirit. If worldly minds be substituted for "graves," holy land or state of perfection for "the land of Israel," and freeing the mind of its worldliness for "opening of the grave," the meaning of the second allegory will be clear.

When Ezekiel and Daniel are quoted "as the first distinct authorities on which this belief (in the General Resurrection of the Dead) might be grounded" (Dean Milman's *History of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 73, revised edition of 1875), we must carefully distinguish their own creed from that of the masses of their countrymen whom they were endeavouring to "snare" and press into "the way of life," — to convert from error and lead unto Truth.

Another great doctrine taught by the Prophets to their countrymen was the Advent of the Messiah (the anointed), who was to spring from the "seed" of David, appear in the "Temple" on "Mount Moriah," summon together the "dispersed tribes," conquer all their "enemies" and establish a "universal empire," the centre of which was to be "Zion," the holy city.

To the Prophets the Messiah or Christ did not mean a person made of flesh and blood, but a *soul sanctified* by apt methods. Isaiah expressly says that Christ is without form or

proportion and yet is transcendingly beautiful (liii: 2). It is only those who have been blessed with the fundamental experiences referred to at Chapter iv, p. 98, that know, and bear witness to, the great truth that, when the little light, little love, and little peace which exist in the human heart grow wider and wider and attain their fullest maturity, they run one into another and form an Infinite whole, a supremely real and sacred Personality, called the Anointed of God, because of this grace fully shed upon It and making It of His own likeness. The "dispersed tribes," known also as the "tribes of the earth," are understood by the sanctified to be the different instruments of knowledge and action given by God to aid the soul in its progress towards Him, but which, being urged by Folly, have gone worldwards, away from God and the care of the Soul; and "universal empire" is the domination of God in all man's thoughts when his conversion from worldliness to godliness has taken place by the grace of God; and Zion is the Soul thus

sanctified in the human body and forming the real temple of God.

But the ignorant multitude and even learned scribes and Pharisees had very different and conflicting ideas of the Sanctified Soul or Messiah or Christ. "Each region, each rank," says Dean Milman, "the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Palestinian, the Samaritan; the Pharisee, the Lawyer, the Zealot, arrayed the Messiah in those attributes which suited his own temperament. Of that which was more methodically taught in the synagogue or the adjacent school, the populace caught up whatever made the deeper impression. The enthusiasm took an active or contemplative, an ambitious or a religious, an earthly or a heavenly tone, according to the education, habits, or station of the believer; and to different men the Messiah was man or angel; he was King, conqueror, or moral reformer; a more victorious Joshua, a more magnificent Herod, a widerruling Cæsar, a wiser Moses, a holier Abraham; an angel, the Angel of the Covenant,

the Metatron, the Mediator between God and man. . . . While this was the religious belief, some there were, no doubt, of the Sadducaic party, or the half-Grœcised adherents of the Herodian family, who treated the whole as a popular delusion" (*Hist. of Christianity*, i, 80).

The bulk of the Jews, who knew nothing of the inner truths of Judaism, mixed up the Coming of the Messiah with the General Resurrection of the Dead, which having been borrowed from Babylon during the captivity, formed the leading article of the schism between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Reference must now be made to another section of the Jews known as the *Essenians*, who are mentioned by Philo, a contemporary writer, as an old established sect.

Josephus wrote of them as follows: "They cherish mutual love beyond other men; they reject all pleasures as sinful, and look on temperance and a conquest over their passions as the greatest virtue. There prevails among them a contempt of matrimony, but

they receive the children of others and educate them as their own while yet tender and susceptible of instructions. They despise riches. . . . Their food is of the plainest kind. . . . They avoid all swearing . . . and consider their word the same as an oath. . . . If any one wishes to join their sect he must undergo a year's probation, and when he has proved himself, is made a partaker of the waters of purification. There are also those among them who foretell things to come. . . . It also deserves our admiration how much they excel all other men in virtue and righteousness to such a degree as hath never appeared among other men. . . . There are about four thousand men who live in this way, and neither marry nor keep servants, thinking the latter tempts men to be unjust, and the former gives a handle to domestic quarrels" (*Wars of the Jews*, II, chap. viii, and *Antiquities*, XVIII, chap. i).

And Philo says that the name "Essenian" means *holy;* that they aimed at attaining the highest holiness in the worship of God, not

by sacrificing animals but by purity of heart; that they left learning and logic to vain and subtle metaphysicians, and contented themselves with the acquisition of virtue and the knowledge of God; that they all lived in common, in thinly populated places and deserts; that their food was coarse bread seasoned with salt, and their drink plain water; that they assiduously practised humility and considered their aim in life to be death to the world, and that many of them delivered magnificent visions, and were hence called Prophets.

Philo belonged, according to Jerome, to the priestly class of the Jews. He was one of the most learned men of the age, having devoted his best resources to a careful study of esoteric Judaism as it was understood at the time of Jesus, whose contemporary he was. His exposition of it is supposed by some men learned in philosophies to be deeply tinged with the principles of the Pythagorean, Stoic, and Platonic schools, which flourished in Alexandria where he usually lived. But it matters little whence his

knowledge of the doctrines was derived, or whether his principles are to be viewed as Judaic or Hellenic or Hellenistico-Judaic, seeing that those of them at least which are cited below are assuredly the doctrines of Jesus and other sanctified souls also.

According to Philo's exposition, God is Perfect Being, transcending all quantity and quality, and therefore unchangeable, eternal, free, and self-sufficient. In Him inheres *Logos* (rendered in the English Bible as the Word), which is the operative principle of creation (*theoi logos hēdē kosmoposountos*), the power or intelligent force which causes the cosmic element (*hulē*) to evolve as the beautiful and orderly universe. The world (*kosmos*) is not born of, or developed from, God, but from the rudiment, stuff, or *materia* (called *hulē*, the material cause) of the world. Originally all souls were of the image of God, but those of them that were attracted by the world became afflicted with evil and subject to sin; and the body in which they are clothed is a real "prison, a coffin, or a grave for the

soul which seeks to rise again to God." Man, being a captive to sense, cannot of his own power escape from the fetters of the world. "As moral effort can bear fruit only with God's help, so too God himself is the goal of that effort. Even in this life, the truly wise and virtuous is lifted above his sensible existence and enjoys in ecstacy the vision of God, his own consciousness sinking and disappearing in the divine light. Beyond this ecstacy there lies but a further step, viz., entire liberation from the body of sense (or the tangible body) and the return of the soul to its original condition. It came from God and must rise to Him again. But natural death brings this consummation only to those who, while they lived on earth, kept themselves free from attachment to the things of sense; all others must at death pass into another body" (Prof. E. Schurer on "Philo," *Encyc. Brit.* xviii, 762, ninth ed.).

Another learned writer observes, "The Essenes bore one of the most momentous

parts in the development of Judaism. Christianity stands in so close connection with them that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ himself have by some been pronounced to have issued from their ranks.

"Josephus, Philo, Pliny, Eusebius, and the Fathers generally were long considered the sources and the only sources from which the genuine history of this fraternity could be deduced. Strange that for so many centuries the real and genuine sources — the Talmudic writings — should never have been thought of. These, together with Josephus and Philo, Pliny, Makrisi, and Abulfarig better enable us to form an idea of the community. . . . The Mishna, Beraitha, and Talmud speak of the advanced Pharisees in general as *Chasidim* (pious men), *Nazirim* (abstinents) and *Toblé Schacharitti*. . . . They became the forerunners of the Christian *Gnostics* and of the Jewish *Cabbalists*. . . . As they had sprung from the Pharisees, so they again merged into them. The remaining part became *Therapeutæ* or (Ascetic) Christians"

(*Chambers' Encyclopedia*, Art. "Essenes," vol. iv, pp. 427–428).

The foregoing survey of religious thought among the Jews ought to make it clear that Judaism consisted of three orders of beliefs in the days of Jesus, namely, those held by the *Sadducees*, the *Pharisees*, and the *Essenes*. They were not three separate systems but parts of a whole. Each was a stage in the Way to the Goal which the Jews aspired to reach. The Sadducees, being too literal in the interpretation of the Law delivered by Moses, occupied the first stage; then came the Pharisees; and nearest the goal stood the Essenes. For all the three fraternities were agreed that salvation meant the Healing of the Corruption of the Soul and attainment of God. Their common ideal was to see God (Gen. xxxii: 30); to be with God (Gen. xxvi: 24; Deut. xviii: 13; Josh. iii: 7; Judges vi: 12; I Sam. x: 7; I Kings viii: 57; Isa. xli: 15); to sit at the right hand of God (Ps. cx: 1); to talk with God (Gen. xxxv: 13); to wait upon the Lord (Isa. xl: 31); to

have the thought established on God (Prov. xvi: 3); to find rest (Isa. lvii: 20); to have peace (Isa. lvii: 21; Jer. xxiii: 17); to find grace or favour in His sight (Judges vi: 17); to be blessed of the Lord (Gen. xxvi: 29); to have power with Him or to prevail over Him (Gen. xxxii: 28); to be able not to let Him go without a blessing (Gen. xxxii: 26); to cleave unto Him (Deut. x: 10, 20; Josh. xxiii: 8); to love the Lord (Deut. xxx: 16; Josh. xxiii: 11); to serve God (Deut. x: 20); to serve Him in sincerity and truth (Josh. xxiv: 14; I Sam. xii: 24); to fear Him (Gen. xxii: 12; Deut. x: 20, Josh. xxiv: 14; I Sam. xii: 14); not to turn aside from following the Lord (I Sam. xii: 20; Josh. i: 7); to be upright and eschew evil (Job i: 8); to walk before Him in integrity and uprightness (I Kings ix: 4); to be perfect (Gen. vi: 9; ib. xvii: 1; Deut. xviii: 13; I Kings viii: 61; Job i: 8).

According to the *Sadducees* "the way" (Deut. xi: 27) to perfection and God, — "the way of life" (Deut. xxx: 20) as opposed to

"the way of death" (Jer. xxi: 8), — "the good and the right way" (I Sam. xii: 23), was the observance of the written law of Moses; according to the *Pharisees*, the observance of the written law, tempered by the traditional oral law; and according to the *Essenes*, a heartfelt adherence to righteousness founded on a complete renunciation of worldly life (which the law of Moses sought to spiritualise by a system of fasting and sacrifice), and single-minded devotion to those practices which had been organised if not originated in Judæa by Samuel the prophet for the purpose of effectually sanctifying the soul. The Sadducees and Pharisees espoused the outer shell or exoteric phase of Judaism, and the Essenes its inner kernel or esoteric phase.

"The Law *and* the Prophets" is the expression used among the Jews to denote this distinction. It includes the whole of the Judaic way, fulfilled by the supremely grand teaching of the Psalms on Oneness of Love or "Unity of Faith."

CHAPTER VI

ON THE TEACHINGS OF THE PSALMS

The Psalms are songs of either seekers of God (*Yogis*), or of those who have sought and found God (*Jnánis*).

In illustration of their teachings, a few Psalms considered.

Lessons of the first Psalm:

Greatness of Blessedness.

Nature of Blessedness and of happiness of the worldly-minded.

How to attain Blessedness.

Should suppress tempting thought at the very outset.

Should never entertain it.

Should not court temptation, but hold aloof from it.

The corruption that rises in the mind as a tempting thought lurks in the mind, the senses, and other members of the body.

Necessity for isolating the spirit from corruption and withdrawing the energy of the Spirit from the offending member.

Should avoid derision, raillery, and caustic wit, because they choke the growth of love.

Should revel in love of God with simple minded devotion.

Must practise meditation daily.

Nature of meditation.

Benefit of meditation. Expansion of spiritual discernment, sound bodily health, and spiritual happiness.

Evils of worldliness.

Lessons of the second Psalm:

It is usual for those who would be spiritual to be tempted to abandon their efforts to attain God.

How corruption makes a grand effort to overcome the awakened soul.

The design of the Lord in regard to souls which have been quickened by hearing the word of God, explained.

It is His will that the seeking soul shall become a Son of God or Christ.

After attaining Christhood, the sanctified soul shall for ever be the ruler of his own household, the members whereof will serve him truly, without any longer acknowledging the sway of corruption.

Lessons of the third Psalm:

Abatement of thought in spiritual communion is a work of extreme difficulty.

But with the help of the Lord it is possible to overcome the vagaries of thought and attain Peace.

The Lord is the author of all salvation. It is He who blesses those who acknowledge Him to be the sovereign ruler of the universe.

Other illustrations:

"Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. xlvi: 10).

"He bringeth them unto the desired haven" (*ib.* cvii: 30).

The Psalms are a book of the spiritual experiences of those who, knowing that life on earth was meant for the kingship of the spirit over flesh, make it their business to attain it amidst the turmoil of worldly engagements, by beseeching God daily and hourly for strength and purity.

THE TEACHING OF THE PSALMS

READING the Psalms by the light of those godly men called *Jnánis* or *Jivanmuktas*, who have attained a full knowledge of God, it is not difficult to identify the Psalms as the Songs of either seekers of God or those who have sought and found God. In India these two classes of spirits are commonly called *Yogis*. Strictly, however, *Yogis* are only seekers; those who have succeeded in the search are *Yuktas* or *Jnánis* (knowers). In the Book of Psalms we have the outpourings of both *Yogis* and *Yuktas*, and from these songs may be collected many a doctrine of Truth and Grace, and many an exercise in Godliness. In illustration, the first three Psalms may be taken and considered at some length.

The first Psalm is clearly that of a *Jnáni* (or knower of God). It explains in the first three verses how growth in Blessedness

or Peace is to be secured, and in the next three verses how the schemes of corruption or the son of perdition (II Thes. ii: 3), to keep the soul in his captivity, are reduced to naught by the omniscient grace of God.

Like Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the Psalmist's exhortation begins with the greatness of Blessedness. This is the keynote of the Psalm. One who knows in actual experience what Blessedness is, knows also the doctrines and practices necessary for its realisation, because it is by such paths he attained Blessedness.

" Blessed is the man
That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly
Nor standeth in the way of sinners
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

Blessedness is spiritual joy as distinguished from worldly joy. The highest of spiritual joys is that within the experience of those only who have attained God, as the result of their ability to *isolate* the spirit from all its surroundings, even from sense impressions and thoughts. When the spirit thus

stands Alone, it is supremely peaceful. This peace, trancending all thought and therefore all modes or changes, is Blessedness. Next to it comes the happiness of those who would be blessed. Their chief desire is to keep the mind well established in the spirit, and the tongue and hand devoted to works that relate to the growth of spirituality in themselves and others; but as such instruments have often to combat opposing forces lurking in those very instruments, the happiness of this class of persons though uplifting is occasionally tinged with sadness. And as regards the happiness of all other beings, it is rooted in some passing worldly desire. It begins at the moment of grasping the object desired and ends with the relaxing of that grasp. The duration of each sensuous enjoyment is thus very short. If wanting in novelty, enjoyment diminishes; if oft repeated, it is fatiguing. Nevertheless, the minds which pursue sensuous pleasures stalk sensuous objects, knowing nothing of the more refined and durable

happiness of seekers of God, or the unspeakable blessedness of those who have found God.

The great Psalmist declares that the man who "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" will attain the spiritual joy called Blessedness. The spirit which strives for it should *never hearken to* the promptings of corruption or wickedness, which in Psalm ii: 1 is spoken of as the "heathen," and in Psalm x: 18 as "the man of the earth," the very expressions used by St. Paul in I Cor. xv: 47, to denote the spirit of error working mysteriously within the instruments of knowledge and action for its base purposes. "As is the earth, so are they that are earthy" (ib. 48). The "Ungodly" are the spirit of error and its emanations.

The man who labours for Godliness must be wakeful enough to suppress at the very outset a tempting thought. He must not entertain it for a second.

The divine Psalmist further explains that the high estate of Blessedness can never be

reached by one who "*standeth in the way of* sinners." "Sinners" is another name for the ungodly. They are the spirit of error and its different manifestations. They stand estranged from God. Their characteristics are those of the "wicked" who, says the Psalmist in x: 4, "will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts." Lying concealed in the senses and in the faculties of thought and speech, and in the hands, feet, and other limbs, he has trained all of them to be his allies in sin, much to the injury of the soul for whose benefit they were created.

What is enjoined by the Psalmist is that the God-loving spirit should not court temptation by standing in the way of the tempter, as if to meet him. It should on the contrary stand out of his way and hold itself aloof from him. It therefore follows that Isolation is the surest remedy against the onslaughts of corruption; not life in lonely places, but the standing aloof of the spirit from the seducing ministers who, entangled in the

meshes of worldliness, will do its bidding if the energy of the spirit is not promptly withdrawn from them. Just as in sleep the subsidence of energy into the spirit causes the activities of the senses and other faculties of thought, speech, and movement, to cease, so in waking moments also the spirit should not lend its energy to the ministers that would function in obedience to the man of the earth.

Eyes were given to see what is good and beautiful in life, but under the captivity of Corruption eyes delight in beholding sensuous scenes. Ears were given to hear sound doctrine — the doctrine that heals the soul of its corruption — but, from association with the spirit of error they love to hear gossip, scandal, and other kinds of vain and evil talk. In the same way, other instruments, given to help the spirit towards Godliness, drag him deeper into the mire of worldliness. When your servants sinfully betray you into the hands of your enemy, that is, the evil spirit within you, what other

course is there for you, the spirit, than to withdraw from them your supplies of energy needful for action?

The Psalmist next describes some of the habits of the carnally-minded man, otherwise called the heathen or the sinner within the body. He and his forces are "scornful." The weapon of wickedness is not argument, but ridicule. It leers, makes faces, despises. Professing love for truth, it is ever on the watch to bring it into disrepute by the slyest methods. It is painfully egotistic. "*I* did this, not you." "But for *me*, things would have gone wrong." "What did *he* do? Nothing at all." "*He* is no good." Such are its formulas of self-appreciation and depreciation of others. It is always differentiating between itself and others. If convinced of its own superiority, it gloats over the fact and loses no opportunity to remind others of their comparative smallness. If, on the other hand, it feels they are superior, it will not only refuse to acknowledge that fact, but will even hate them for their

superiority, ever waiting for an opportunity to misrepresent them. "They hate me without a cause," said the spiritual man of worldly men (Psalm lxix: 4; John xv: 25).

To be with the scorner and copy his ways of derision, raillery, and caustic wit is to choke the seeds of Love and Truth in the Soul. The blissfulness of Spiritual Life will not be vouchsafed to one who practises such works of the Fool (Ps. xiv: 1; ib. xlix: 13).

Isolating himself as much as possible from the sinful and scornful spirit of error, the seeker after God should "*delight* in the Law of the Lord," says the anointed Psalmist. He must ascertain what that Law is and then obey it with glowing enthusiasm.

"If thou wilt enter into life" (or Eternal Life or knowledge of God, John 17: 3), said Jesus, "keep the Commandments" (Matt. xix: 17); and in answer to the question, "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is

the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Matt. xxii: 36–40)."

The true seeker is he who doth "*meditate day and night*" upon the supremely beautiful and all comprehensive Love of God. Having learnt from the Anointed Teacher the differentiating ways of Darkness or Hate, the apt disciple should cultivate the art of *unifying* himself *in spirit* with all others, by remembering that bodies are only vestments of the spirit, and that it is time vainly spent to note the disparities between bodies that are destined to fall off and rot. He should meditate particularly how God, the Infinite Spirit, stands evenly in the finite spirits of all living bodies and maintains and protects them all unceasingly. He should find exemplifications of the Lord's mercies and continuously make his mind run upon the grace that has been shed upon him and all others in numberless ways. In this manner he should *expand*

his spiritual discernment so as to establish himself more and more upon God; even as in days of yore he allowed his mind to run on worldly things and found himself established on sensuousness or worldliness, with the result that he was never happy for any length of time but was tossed about like a dry leaf, a plaything of every passing humour.

The Psalmist, having himself passed from worldliness to Godliness, gives his disciple the assurance that by the practice of meditation on Godly Love day and night, that is, twice a day at least, "he shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water that bringeth forth its fruit in its season." How pleasing is a tree loaded with luscious fruit! How much more precious is it when, by reason of its establishment on the banks of a perennial stream of fresh water it yields a perennial harvest! Even so, the seeker who, divorced from the ways of the flesh, establishes himself on Truth and Love by daily meditations and deep spiritual communion, grows strong in spirit and brings forth the fruits of the

spirit, called Christhood, and the power of healing the corrupt maladies of other souls by effective instruction.

"Its leaf also shall not wither," says the Psalmist, of the tree that draws life from the pure stream. He means the powers of the body and mind, for worthy purposes, will not diminish or disappear, while spiritual strength in all its austerity is being gained. "Seek ye first the kingdom of righteousness," said Jesus, "and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6: 33). It is a great mistake to suppose that the development of spirituality disqualifies one for worldly work.

Furthermore the Psalmist declares, "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Prosperity here does not mean attainment of worldly possessions. The man of God cares naught for the perishable "treasures" of worldly life. He is not moved by gaining or losing them. He cares only for spiritual progress. If the spirit prospers in Love and Truth, his happiness is complete.

"Not so the ungodly, but like the chaff which the wind driveth away," says the Psalmist. Worldly-minded men are reckless and cannot hope for the fulfilment of Love or Blessedness. Their works in search of happiness bring them no happiness. They may be likened to wind-tossed chaff.

"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

The Master means that, as ungodliness is not steadfast nor established in Truth and Love, it will never see the day of judgment or discernment, which is the great spiritual experience known to the *Jivanmuktas* of India as *átma darśanam* (appearance of the spirit), and to the *Jivanmuktas* of Judea as the Coming of Christ. And for want of such knowledge the sinful spirit, which stands estranged from God, cannot be with sanctified spirits.

"For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous
But the way of the ungodly shall perish."

It is impossible to deceive God. He knows who is righteous and who is not. Being

omniscient, he never allows the ungodly spirit of error to thwart the efforts of the meditative soul to attain by Isolation, Aloneness, or Sanctification the highest form of happiness, *viz.*, Blessedness.

The second Psalm is also the outpouring of a *Jnáni*. It continues the ideas begun in the first Psalm. After describing the ways of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, — who in India are called *Mumukshus* or seekers of freedom from the entanglements of worldliness, — the Anointed One of the Lord — called in India *Jnáni* or *Jivanmukta* — proceeds to explain how the spirit of error makes, in this freedom-loving state of the soul, one final and great attempt to keep it within its captivity, urging the ministers of the soul not to go with the soul into the path pointed out by the Sacred Teacher, but to rebel against him and the Lord who sent him. It is further explained that such rebellion will be vain, and the Psalmist concludes his inexpressibly sweet song by an exhortation to the ministers of the soul to

stand by and serve the soul truly in fear of the invincible power of the Lord. Let us consider the Psalm in some detail.

The first verse is, —

> "Why do the heathen rage
> And the people imagine a vain thing?"

The Hebrew word *goiim*, rendered in Greek as *ethné*, and in English as *gentiles* and *heathen*, stands for the beings that delight in the heath or jungle of lawlessness. They hate the commandments of the Lord laid down for the guidance of the spirit. They are the essence of carnality, which, inhering in the instruments of knowledge and action of the soul, leads them into the sensuous side of life, into unspiritual ways.

"Why do the heathen rage?" Why is the corrupt spirit in a state of great excitement? The answer is, because the Anointed Teacher or *Jnána Guru* has come to explain to the *Mumukshu*, or seeker of Freedom, that he should be on his guard against it, an utter heathen.

"Why do the people imagine a vain thing?" The people are the ministers of the soul created out of cosmic stuff or flesh and given to the soul to help it in its career from darkness to Light. Being creatures of flesh, these ministers have a natural tendency to espouse the cause of darkness, and are therefore called "his strong ones" in Psalm x: 10. It is by means of these powerful ministers that the spirit of error consummates its work of darkness or evil. In Psalm xii: 4 the Psalmist speaks of them as saying, "With our tongue we shall prevail, our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?" Their habit is to "puff" at the Lord (ib. 5).

Knowing that the *Jnána Guru* has arrived, and that the days of Corruption and its "strong ones" are on the decline, they indulge in idle and futile schemes. It is a fact within the experience of *Mumukshus* that, when they are under the instruction of the *Jnána Guru*, the question often arises in their minds, Is it really necessary to thus develop the fire of austerity in us? Is there

no other way of attaining God? The Psalmist declares in the second verse that such doubts are the creations of the spirit of Error or Corruption. It runs as follows: —

> "The kings of the earth set themselves,
> And the rulers take counsel together
> Against the Lord and his Anointed, saying
> Let us break their bands asunder
> And cast away their cords from us."

The kings of the earth are the rudiments (Col. ii: 8) or elements (Gal. iv: 3) of the flesh which hold the soul in captivity (Gal. v: 9). Because these powers of the earth or flesh *dominate* the soul, they are called the "*kings* of the earth" or earthly kings. In Matt. xxiv: 30, Jesus spoke of them as the "tribes of the earth." Keenly alive to the critical state of affairs, upon the appearance of the Anointed Teacher they draw themselves together resolutely, and work insidiously within the reason and will of the seeking spirit. They conspire against God and him who was sanctified and sent into the world (John x: 36) to reclaim the seeker

of freedom, saying, "Now that they are going to bind us by their cords of fire, we shall soon be consumed like fagots. Let us make one final effort to throw away these bonds and escape with the soul, who is wavering in loyalty to us."

The assurance of the Psalmist given in verses 4 and 5 is that God who lies unseen in the heart smiles at their folly, for who can resist His omnipotence? He will manifest himself as a Consuming Fire (Deut. v: 24; Jer. xxiii: 29; Luke xii: 49; Heb. xii: 29) and burn up the cords of captivity, saying to them (verse 6): "Ye, powers of darkness, fancy that ye are kings, but now learn the truth that the king in the body is the spirit; that the senses, the faculties of thought and speech and all other instruments which I have placed in the body are the subjects of that king; that the spirit whom I have anointed with my grace shall for ever be in fellowship with me in the holy state called Zion."

Then the Anointed Psalmist declares in

verses 7–9 what the plan of God's salvation is, as revealed to him in spiritual communion. It is his design and will that the spirit in the body shall one day attain the holy state called Christhood or Sonship of God; that that day shall be known as that of the re-birth of the spirit; that such re-birth shall be prayed for in all earnestness; that the Lord shall then graciously overcome the corrupt power which holds the spirit in captivity and shall endow the righteous spirit with sufficient strength to dissipate the machinations of corruption and remain in purity for ever.

In verses 10–12 the Sanctified Psalmist exhorts the powers of darkness, which had dominated the spirit, to behave with prudence and never to assume the role of kings in respect of the spirit hungering for righteousness, but to do homage to it, for the simple reason that it put its trust in the Anointed Teacher and in God who has sent him to such spirit.

The first two Psalms are the utterances of a *Jnána Guru*. The third is the song of a

Mumukshu, striving hard to obtain union with the Lord.

Meditating upon the eternal truth that all power belongeth to the Lord (Ps. lxii: 11) and earnestly endeavouring to realise the doctrine of self-surrender taught in the prayer "*Thine* is the kingdom, *thine* the power, and *thine* the glory for ever," the *Mumukshu* sits in *yoga* or spiritual communion and endeavours to dismiss from his consciousness the memories of the worldly life which revolve on the pivots called "I" and "mine." Do what he may to forsake these conceits and the thoughts that are linked to them, they creep in and hold him fast to the things of the earth. He shakes off one coil of thought only to find himself entangled in another. Though no longer running after the vain shows of the world, the spirit is still overlaid with worldly desire, and its bifurcations called like and dislike are the subtle forms on which memories and expectations thrive. It is in this helpless state of entanglement that the seeker after God sang the third Psalm.

"How are they increased that trouble me,
Many are they that rise up against me,
Many which say of my soul
There is no help for him in God."

This may be rendered as follows: When I sit in silence for spiritual communion with Thee, O Lord, how thickly do thoughts crowd around me, how incessantly, how actively (Ps. xxxviii: 19) do worldly memories and hopes, which I believed were dead and buried long ago, disturb the quiet of my soul. I appeal to thee to blot out my transgressions or vagrant thoughts (Ps. li: 1). The corrupt spirit, which beats up such thoughts, taunts me, saying, "Your God will not help you. Why do you struggle against me? Why do you not continue to delight in things worldly as of yore?"

"But Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.
My glory and the lifter up of mine head.
I cried unto the Lord with my voice
And he heard me out of his holy hill."

Which means: Thou, O Lord, art my protector, strong enough to cast down my captors; my illuminer in the sea of darkness;

the sustainer of my spirit, not letting it be drowned in the struggle against the waves of thought. O brother seekers, in dire distress I cried to the Lord for help and his grace flowed into me from within my inmost being.

"I laid me down and slept,
I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
That have set themselves against me round about."

Which means: Hear, O brother seekers; my prayer was answered, for I was not disturbed in spiritual communion. My thoughts calmed down and I was in comparative peace, with the Lord's help. It matters not how many thoughts arise again, for so long as the Lord sustains me in all mercy, I know I shall have strength to keep them down.

"Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God,
For thou hast smitten all my enemies upon the cheek bone.
Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.
Thy blessing is upon thy people."

Which means: Do not, O Lord, let me remain long in the antechambers, but draw

me unto Thyself into the Holy of Holies. Save me altogether from the powers of darkness. Thou hast reduced almost to naught its hold of me. It is Thine now to wholly save Thy seekers and grant them the fulness of bliss.

Abatement of thought and wakefulness in spiritual communion secure for the soul the greatest of all blessings, called Stillness or Peace. It is assuredly the greatest blessing, for in stillness alone does the Soul know God. Clear space or sky cannot be seen when a dust storm is blowing. Neither can the Soul know God, who is the substrate of all nature, when a cloud of thoughts rises and envelopes the Soul, and prevents it from seeing itself, or God who is in it. Therefore has the Lord said, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. xlvi: 10), meaning, if you be still, then will you know that "I AM" is God. If you admit your insufficiency for yourself, if you feel that you are indeed weak and need His Power, he will help you to overcome your worldly thoughts and other troubles of life.

'They cry unto the Lord in their trouble
And He bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh a storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet;
So He bringeth them unto their desired haven." — Ps. cvii: 28–30.

This will suffice to show the priceless strata of spiritual thought which lies embedded in the Psalms. They are full of the *actual experiences* of either seekers of God, or those who have sought and found God. These hymns in the Old Testament attest, over and over again and in words of highest assurance, the great and mysterious fact that, when the soul, tired of the domination of corruption, finds itself utterly unable to overcome it and appeals to God as the only power that can help it, God does in truth respond to the prayer and make the soul free from such corruption, and king of its own ministers of knowledge and action.

This kingship of the spirit over the flesh by the grace of God, — this overthrow of impurity and attainment of independence

by the spirit that hungers for it, — is the Crown of Life (James i: 12) on earth, which every one who knows the value of birth should labour for. The Psalms are truly the highest teaching of the Old Testament. It is time to consider the doctrines set forth in the books of the New Testament.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE PRACTICAL NATURE OF THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS, AS REGARDS THE CONVERSION OF SELF-LOVE INTO PERFECT LOVE

The "good Shepherd" and his "sheep" are the True Teacher and the spiritually-minded ripe for instruction.

Christ in what sense "King" and "royal Priest."

Proper function of Christ, to draw qualified souls near unto God; to show the way to God.

Doctrines of Jesus not his own, but God's.

Principles of Spiritual Life how discovered.

Revelation of God in deep spiritual communion.

God is illuminer, and Apostles are the illumined.

Apostolic knowledge is actual knowledge of God as distinguished from hearsay knowledge or inferential knowledge gathered by study of nature.

Difference between spiritual and worldly experience.

God and Apostle as Father and Son in fellowship.

Sermon on the Mount delivered to the spiritually-minded, who feel the desecration of unrest and the want of something higher than the world can give.

Souls who delight in unrest or excitement cannot understand the sermon.

Likes and dislikes, worldly hopes and fears, the cause of unrest and sorrow.

Our thoughts are our burdens.

The past, the present, and the future, as regards perishable things, are the three fagots of thought destined to be gradually consumed by the fire of spiritual

knowledge, when the end for which they were collected has been fulfilled.

Perfection of spiritual growth and conquest of care and sorrow, the great theme of the Sermon.

Necessity for changing old modes of thought centred in attachments to perishable things and fleeting pleasures, for right modes of thought centred in imperishable things.

Doctrine of Repentance or turning of mind from worldliness to Godliness, the prologue to the sermon.

Worldly life is preparation for knowledge of God as Infinite Love.

The Sermon on the Mount, a series of lessons on soul culture.

Difference between soul culture and mind culture.

First lesson in soul culture relates to Spiritual Love.

The parent of Spiritual Love is neighbourly love.

And neighbourly love is born of sex love.

Gradations of neighbourly love.

Highest grade of such love called philanthropy.

Spiritual love is higher even than philanthropy, because enemies and friends are loved alike by the spiritual man.

Such unbounded love necessary "that ye may be the children of your Father" (Matt. v: 43).

Impossibility of becoming a Son of God without infinite love.

To love others because they love us is only a type of self-love.

Spirit or Soul is that which loves.

Corruption or Folly is that which hates and frets and worries.

To be spiritual, the spirit must go on loving to the end, no matter what others do (John xiii: 1).

Must increase more and more in love (I Thes. iv: 9, 10).

Growth in love is growth in spirit.

Three stages of spiritual growth (*helikia*, Eph. iv: 13).

Perfect (spiritual) love is always associated with fulness of joy, called blessedness.

The Sermon on the Mount is the gospel of the formation of the Perfect Spirit or Christ in man (Eph. iv: 13).

Mere intellectual education cannot build up this Perfection of Love in the human heart.

Other methods necessary for discarding carnal mindedness and acquiring spiritual mindedness.

Intellect must be established on the spirit.

The principles of spiritual unfoldment are different from principles of worldly life, and are intended only for those spiritually grown.

The aim of laws and customs of worldly life being the suppression of the element of selfishness in love, so that Love itself may not be choked, Apostles of God do not interfere with worldly injunctions given by legislators, judges, sectarian teachers of religions, and social leaders.

The teachings of Apostles are only for those who are not satisfied with their own teachers. "I am not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets" (Matt. v: 17).

God's "drawing" of the spiritually-minded to Himself through his Apostles (John vi: 44, 45).

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs" (Matt. vii: 6).

The Spiritually grown, as enumerated by Jesus (Matt. v: 3–11) are,

1. The poor in spirit.
   Meaning of "poverty of spirit."
2. They that mourn.
   Meaning of "mourning."
3. The meek.
   Meaning of "the meek."
   Meaning of "inheriting the earth."
4. They who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
   Meaning of "righteousness."
   In what way they will be "filled."
5. They who are persecuted for righteousness sake.
   Steadfast love for righteousness.

6. The merciful.
   Meaning of mercy of man and mercy of God.
7. The pure in heart.
8. The peace-makers.
   Necessity for pacifying one's own mind, so as to attain the Stillness which the Psalmist spoke of. It is essential to knowing God in Spiritual Communion.
   St. Paul on "casting down imaginations" (II Cor x: 5).
   Without abatement of thought and wakefulness in spiritual communion, the "Peace that passeth understanding" (Phil. iv: 17) cannot be reached in actual experience.
   Peace, derived from Lat. *pax*, *pacis*, is same as *paksha* in Sanskrit, meaning Love.
   Peace-making or the art of making Perfect Love, in what way to be compared with the art of making butter.

The final achievement of the art of making Peace is the emergence of the long hidden soul from the heart as Infinite Love called Christ or Son of God.

Jesus' exposition of the signs of the "coming" or appearance of Christ, and of the "end of the world" (Matt. xxiv:).
   These are matters of inner experience in spiritual communion, not objective phenomena.

Why the appearance of Christ or the Perfected Soul should be called the second birth of the soul.

Its "first birth" was its "fall" into worldliness.

It is "quickened" by hearing the word of God.

Its "second birth" is its "rise" to Godliness.

ON THE PRACTICAL NATURE OF THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS, AS REGARDS THE CONVERSION OF SELF LOVE INTO PERFECT LOVE

When Jesus heard that the Scribes and Pharisees had excommunicated the man whom he had cured of blindness, he graciously sought him out and consoled him with the truth that the restoration of his sight came from God through his Son, and that that Son was himself. "For (granting) discernment (*krima*)," said he, "I am come into this world, that they who see not might see, and they who see might be made blind." Some of the Jews heard these words and remarked, "Are we blind also?" (John ix: 35–40). Then he delivered the parable of the good Shepherd and the sheep who hear his voice, which they did not understand. The good Shepherd is the True Teacher from God whom only the spiritually-minded can

understand; the bad shepherds are worldly-minded teachers who expound religions wrongly, and so mislead their hearers; and True Teachers (or Apostles) are sent into the world to help not only those who, caring naught for sensuous enjoyments, are worthy of spiritual knowledge, but also those who, in spite of their fondness for dogma and ritual, deserve to know the truth that intellectual satisfaction with creeds and apologetics will not give them the spiritual discernment needed for realising God in their hearts as an uplifting, joyous, and supremely pacific Power.

Sometime afterwards, seeing Jesus at the porch of the temple of Solomon, the Pharisees gathered round him and said, "If thou be Christ, tell us plainly." He replied, "I told you, and ye believed not; . . . ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. . . . *My sheep hear my voice and follow me*" (John x: 24–27). They understood him to say that he was Christ, and that they were not spiritually-minded enough to recognise

him as such. He added, "I and my Father are one." The Jews took this for blasphemy and picked up stones to hurt him. He then reminded them of the saying in the Psalms (lxxxii: 6), "Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High," and said, "Say ye of him whom the Father hath *sanctified and sent into the world* 'thou blasphemeth,' because I said I am a Son of God" (John x: 36). He meant that their conception of Christ or Son of God did not accord with their Scriptures, nor with spiritual experiences, for Sons of God were men whose *spirits* had attained sanctification, and whose work in the world was to teach the truths relating to spiritual development.

And when the Jews led him before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judæa, upon the false charge that he posed as King of the Jews, he explained, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom was of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now my Kingdom is not hence." Pilate

rejoined, "Art thou then a King?" Jesus owned the title in these words: "Thou sayest that *I am a King. To this end was I born;* and for this cause came I into the world, namely, that I should *bear witness unto the truth.* Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii: 33–37).

The investment of every spirit with a human body in this world was ordained by God in order that the *spirit* may rise from its condition of subjection to folly or corruption and become a King, not in the sense of a ruler of extensive square miles of earth, nor a ruler of people attached to the things of the earth, but in the sense of being *independent of* the restless selfishness and greed for gratification which torment the spirit. When freed altogether from the beggarly elements of corruption, the spirit is said to be *sanctified;* and it is then fit to teach those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and peace. The spirit thus qualified to teach the doctrine and practices necessary for sanctification is called an Apostle of God or *one*

sent into the world to bear witness unto the truth; and the spirits ripe for hearing and understanding such principles are the sheep who *hear the voice* of the teacher, and *follow him* with cheerfulness and one-minded devotion. They understand and obey the Apostle. He is their "good shepherd," a veritable "king" unto them, their Lord (*kurios*) and Teacher (*didaskalos*) (John xiii: 13), belonging to "a royal priesthood," chosen to "shew forth the praises of him who has called you (the seekers) out of darkness into light" (I Pet. ii: 9).

The "royal priesthood" referred to by St. Peter was the high spiritual status attained for the first time in Judæa by King Melchisedek, of Salem, to whom Abraham paid tithe and received from him a blessing. It is recorded in Gen. xiv: 18, 19 that Melchisedek was a priest of "the Most High God." The body or flesh cannot be priest. It is the *spirit* that quickens by the grace of God, and grows to its fullest maturity or perfection in love and light; and it is such a

perfect spirit that is called Christ. St. Paul speaks of Jesus as "made an high priest forever *after the order of Melchisedek* (Heb. v: 10); that is, the spirit in Jesus and the spirit in Melchisedek belong to the same high-priesthood of God, because of their perfection. And in the same epistle (vii: 2, 3) St. Paul says Melchisedek is the King of Righteousness and of Peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made of the image (*aphōmoiōmenos*) as a son of God: meaning, that the spirit in Melchisedek is pacific, aboriginal, and eternal. And then St. Paul declares once more in emphatic language that Jesus is *another priest* after the similitude (*kata tēn homoiōtēta*) of Melchisedek (ib. vii: 15): meaning, that the spirit in Jesus is not the same as the spirit in Melchisedek, but similar to it, being pacific, aboriginal, and eternal. Even so, in Psalms ii: 7 and cx: 1, 4, we hear the Psalmist proclaiming to those who have ears to hear, not only his own attainment of Christhood, but

also the general ordainment of God that he who strives for perfection shall attain it and be for ever a priest (Heb. *cohen*, Gr. *hiereus*) that is, a *drawer* of qualified spirits *near* to God. Hence the famous sayings that Christ shows the way to God and is the Way to God. St. Paul referred, in Gal. i: 1–16, to his own attainment of Christhood, called also the Resurrection from the Dead (Col. i: 18). He said he had "many things to say and hard to be uttered" of the order of Melchisedek or the King of Righteousness, but that the Hebrews were dull of hearing and were not grown in spirit sufficiently to understand the doctrine relating to the beginning of the formation of Christ (*logos tēs archēs tou Christou*) (Heb. v: 11–14; Gal. iv: 19). He particularly warned all the brethren in Christ to avoid foolish questions regarding the genealogy of Christ (Titus iii: 9; I Tim. i: 4), for Christ being spirit has no genealogy.

The texts quoted from the Old and the New Testament (Gen. xiv: 18, 19; Ps. ii;

7 and cx: 1, 4; Heb. v: 11–14; ib. vii: 15; Gal. i: 1, 16, etc.) have proved a stumbling-block to those who are wedded to the belief there is only one Christ for all time in the Universe, and that that Christ is Jesus. It has been already shown in Chapter iv that this belief is not consistent with the teachings of Jesus or Paul, nor with the actual experiences of the Sanctified Spirits of India, according to whom Perfected Spirits in human bodies are indeed righteous and peaceful and without parentage or genealogy, because eternal and co-existent with God. God is in every spirit and every spirit is in God from eternity. The spirit that is in bondage to darkness does not know that it lives and moves in God (John i: 5; Acts xvii: 28); but the spirit that has been freed from darkness has full knowledge of God, and they stand in the relation of Son and Father in the sense that God is the upholder or bearer of the spirit, the sower of it in the body, and the gatherer of it from the body.

Jesus taught of God and the sanctified

spirit called Christ, as all Apostles, urged by God, have taught from the remotest ages to the present day. "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father has taught me I speak these things" (John viii: 28). God reveals to all His devoted seekers His own mysterious existence within the spirit after graciously uncovering the spirit itself which lies mysteriously within the body (Col. i: 27; ii: 2), so that in spiritual communion the risen spirit knows itself and God who is within it. It is then able to teach other seeking spirits how to attain God. Such teachers are the Apostles of God. They speak from personal knowledge of Christ and God. "*Verily, verily,* I say unto thee," said Jesus, "we speak what we *do know*" (John iii: 11).

This actual knowledge of the soul and God is spiritual experience, as distinguished from worldly experience. The latter consists of the reports of the senses and the correlation of sense perceptions; but the former relates to that which the senses cannot perceive, not even with the aid of the telescope and micro-

scope. The scanning of the sky, the air, the fire, the water, and land cannot reveal God or the Soul, but when the soul, isolating itself by degrees from sense perceptions and the agitations of thought, enters in spiritual communion the holy state called Peace, *it knows itself* to be something different from the senses and the mind; it knows itself to be *Light and Love*, and thereafter knows God as the Infinite Substrate of all life, the great Upholder and Illuminer of everything that exists in the Universe. This is the greatest of all discoveries, the discovery of God in the soul. It is the unveiling of the profoundly mysterious *fact* expressed by the formula "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (John xiv: 11), signifying that the spirit, when sanctified, enters into fellowship with God.

The Jews among whom Jesus laboured did not know that there was anything beyond worldly experience. "Ye do not receive our testimony," said he to them (John iii: 11). They were crassly ignorant of things

spiritual. He tried to convince them by other arguments that eternal life or actual knowledge of God (John xvii: 3) was attainable by learning of Sons of God (ib. v: 25). He referred to the testimony of John the Baptist, the miraculous powers of God entrusted to him, and the texts in the old Testament that bore upon the coming of the Sanctified in Spirit, and added, "Ye will not come to me that ye may have life. I know you. Ye have not the love of God in you." Considering the course of events since the days of Jesus and the manner in which Christian dogma and literature have grown, it is a pardonable error on the part of Western Nations to ascribe to Jesus, and Jesus only, the different passages in the Old Testament which announce a Messiah for man's salvation. The redemption of man by Infinite Mercy went on for æons before Jesus and will go on for æons after the nations that delight in the name of Jesus have passed away. It is foolish to attempt to monopolise God or His Apostles. So long as men live in the

universe God will continue to send to them His Apostles, as occasion demands, of His bounty. What are called Messianic prophesies are not peculiar to the Jews but come within the general Divine Law of the "drawing" or "calling" of the Spirit to God, which Jesus so frequently taught (John vi: 44, 65; ib. xii: 32; Matt. xxii: 14). This is also known as the choosing of the qualified spirits. "Hearken my beloved brethren," said St. James (ii: 5), "hath not God *chosen* the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he hath *promised* to them that love him?" This is a general promise or decree. Such is the bounty of God from the beginning of time and will be so to the end.

Jesus, who had attained the acme of spiritual maturity called Perfect Love, and who thus became an Apostle of God, delivered his Sermon on the Mount to his "sheep" or band of earnest disciples, in order that they might enter the same holy state of Blessedness, wherein the flesh does

not war against the spirit, wherein Peace or Perfect Rest reigns.

The vast majority of souls do not care for poise or rest: they delight in excitement. The wilder it is the more "enjoyable" is it to them. Some love fight and bloodshed; some, cruel sport and fun; some, lewdness; some, dances, theatres, shopping, and tattle; some, mischief and practical jokes; some, loud laughter, brag, and bluster; some, gay dress, dainty meals, and useless talk. They are all carnally-minded; and their happiness being rooted in the gratification of the senses is never stable. If gratified the senses soon crave for more; and if not gratified they irritate. In this way the sensuous pleasures of the carnally-minded are much mixed with pain, to say nothing of their grossness, which makes the ears dull of hearing and the mind incapable of understanding the principles of true life. It is not given them to know the higher forms of happiness available to those who despise self-indulgence, who restrain their

likes and dislikes so as to live a well-balanced life.

But persons desiring a higher life are often weighted with divers cares. Domestic duties and social engagements follow one another in quick succession, leaving no time or peace of mind to meditate on the numerous mercies of God. Earnest, hard-working parents have often to think of the waywardness of their children and of the constant troubles which some of them create in the household through extravagance, immorality, or other forms of reckless conduct. Many dutiful wives are burdened with the heartlessness of their husbands; and many having lived together lovingly for years suffer the pangs of separation from them by death. Old fathers and mothers, who had generously spent their all in educating and establishing in some industry their children, find themselves unwelcomed and uncared for. Disease, disappointments, misfortune, poverty, neglect on the part of friends and relations, and insult on the part of the haughty

and the shameless, swell the bundle of cares. Bygone memories, present conditions, and future prospects, if disagreeable, bring wretchedness. Under the weight of these three bundles of thought man labours heavily along the journey of life, knowing not how to be rid of them. Do what he may, he cannot force himself from them, howsoever learned he may be. "How glad I would be if I could wipe out the past and cease to think of the future!" he says to himself. "Even the present worries me. Is there no peace on earth? Why am I a creature of hopes and fears, likes and dislikes, a thing of contradiction and strife? Why am I tormented in this way? Is there no remedy for strife, for sorrow, and for fear born of impending danger or trouble?"

To persons who have found that their thoughts are not themselves, and who feel that their thoughts are their burdens, Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavily laden, and I shall give rest unto you. Learn of me and you shall find rest

unto your souls" (Matt. xi: 28, 29). His ministry or service to those growing in spirit related to the greatest of all human problems, namely, the conquest of care and sorrow. This is the practical value of the Sermon on the Mount to Western Nations.

He began his ministry with the Doctrine of Repentance (Matt. iv: 17). The Greek word *metanœō*, rendered *repent*, signifies in truth to *change* one's thoughts. Jesus meant that the sorrows and fears of man were due to his own wrong modes of thought, and that, if he *changed* those modes, he would attain the desired freedom. His answer to the souls who longed to be free was precisely the same as that given by other Sanctified Teachers in India, Judea, and other places, *viz.*, "*Turn* your thoughts from things perishable to things imperishable" (Ps. li: 10, lxxxv: 4, 8; I Kings viii: 47; Jer. xxv: 5, etc.). It is usual for men to walk after the flesh (II Pet. ii: 10); to try the ways of the flesh first, and then *turn* to the Lord (Lam. iii: 40). It is only after experiencing the

truth that "flesh lusteth against the spirit" (Gal. v: 17), and that "he who soweth to the flesh shall reap corruption" (Gal. vi: 8), that the mind loses faith in the flesh and proceeds to abide in the spirit. Schools and colleges full of worldly learning create in the students who flock to them the belief that the vast array of human bodies and the houses, shops, and parks, which together make up towns, are the most valuable and permanent treasures of a country. The youthful learners, knowing nothing of the invisible souls in bodies, nor of the requirements of souls, nor of God who reigns throughout the universe, fancy their bodies to be themselves, their likes and dislikes to be the surest motives to action, and the law of retaliation to be the most proper guide to conduct in regard to others. Mistaking the flesh and its cravings for the spirit and its aspirations, they sow to the flesh and reap abundant harvests of trouble and sorrow. "No flesh shall have peace," said Jeremiah (xii: 12). It is full of strife and sorrow.

Therefore, "Be transformed, by the *renewing* of your mind," said St. Paul (Rom. xii: 2). Turn your mind from worldliness to Godliness, from selfish love to perfect love, so that you may be as blessed as God, said Jesus.

The study of the world and of all things of the flesh in it befits man for knowledge of God in whom there is no strife, because He is all Love. Those who crave for Peace must grow in Love. The Sermon on the Mount is a series of lessons on Love culture or Soul culture, for Love is another word for Soul.

Just as men of the world, in imparting lessons in worldly life, lay stress on body culture and mind culture as necessary for physical and mental strength, so men of God, called upon to lead thoughtful spirits to God, dwell upon soul culture as necessary for the expansion of Love; and the first lesson in it is about Spiritual Love, which is not sex love or animal love. The love of one spirit for another apart from sexhood, color, creed, or country is the beginning of spiritual love.

Its parent is neighbourly love, which, wonderful to relate, springs from sex love. A selfish male, be he man or animal, consorting with a female, finds his sense of differentiation lapsing into the sense of unity. Two human beings may become one through sex love, and all the progeny born of their loins also become one with them. This love for one's wife and children is neighbourly love in its first stage of growth. Its second stage is love for one's castemen or coöperators. The third stage is love for fellow-townsmen; the fourth for fellow-countrymen; and lastly for man, irrespective of country, color, or creed. In this last stage neighbourly love is called philanthropy, which is the beginning of spiritual love. If unwedded persons in this life have neighbourly love, it must be considered to be the result of thoughtful experiences in past lives on earth. Higher than philanthropy is spiritual love, because enemies and friends alike are loved by the spiritual man.

Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it hath

been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour but hate thine enemy,' but I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, *that ye may be the children of your Father*, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Matt. v: 43–47).

It is indeed the work of selfish love to love those only who love us. To love others *because* they love us is really to love oneself. Self-love is common to animals also. Even centipedes, crocodiles, and tigers love those of their species which love them. The spirits in human bodies must do more than those in animal bodies. Human beings should expand self-love into neighbourly love, and neighbourly love into spiritual love, by loving irrespectively of the friendly or hostile moods of others. Such moods are passing phases of the mind, and not characteristics of the spirit. God is Spirit, God is Love. Therefore Spirit is Love. *That which loves*

is Spirit. That which hates and frets is *not* the spirit, but the corrupt thing called Folly, which stands much mixed with the Spirit. If love is to be Godly, it should not make mountains of the manifestations of Folly; nor should it be misled by the agreeable and the disagreeable, the pleasant and the unpleasant, because such sensations are of the mind and not of the spirit. Howsoever agreeable or disagreeable other spirits may make themselves in their foolishness, the spirit that would rise above animality or carnality should not treat those who pose as "enemies" differently from those who pose as "friends." It should have pity for spirits afflicted by bondage to Folly. They do not know the perilous consequences of that species of folly called hatemaking. Whatever *they* may do, *we* must go on loving right through, *love to the end* (John xiii: 1). He that *dwelleth* in love, dwelleth in God, for God is Love" (I John iv: 16).

Increase more and more in brotherly love, said St. Paul (I Thes. iv: 9, 10). Growth in

spirit is growth in love. Just as the body has a growth marked by different characteristics and denoted by the terms infancy, youth, middle age, and old age, the spirit has a growth of its own, which St. Paul speaks of as *helikia*, the characteristics of which are denoted by the terms self-love, neighbourly love, and Perfect Love.

"That ye may be the children of your Father," said Jesus, expand neighbourly love into Perfect Love (Matt. v: 45–48). "Be ye *therefore* perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (v: 48). Why should the perfection or full growth of Love be the goal of all human endeavour in earthly life? Because God is Perfect Love. Love and Joy go together. The greater the love, the greater the joy; fulness of love is fulness of joy (John xv: 11; xvii: 13) and fulness of spiritual joy is Blessedness. Therefore the last verse (48) in Matthew v stands intimately linked with the opening verses in the same chapter which deal with Blessedness, the highest form of Happiness known in the Universe.

The Sermon on the Mount is of the utmost practical value to all who would grow in spirit, grow in true, durable happiness. It is the gospel of the formation of the Perfect Man (*anēr teleios*), or Perfect Spirit, or Son of God, or Christ (Eph. iv: 13). Mere intellectual education cannot produce this fulness of spiritual growth, because the intellect or reason is only an instrument of the soul, and the culture of this instrument will not of itself add an iota of righteousness or love to the soul. Intellectual improvement does not mean spiritual improvement. It is only when the intellect is established on the spirit that it is really helpful to it in its growth. Carnal mindedness leads the spirit worldward, but spiritual mindedness leads it Godward. The Sermon on the Mount is a marvellously beautiful exposition of the principles, long held secret (Matt. xiii: 35), of that Infinite Love, Light, and Joy which characterise God when standing in intimate relation with all spirits and worlds, and which he mercifully vouchsafes to those who would labour

to attain his image or likeness in those respects, and in those respects only; for we cannot be like him in power. He can create, maintain, and destroy worlds and universes, but we cannot produce even a mineral cell or a snow crystal or a vegetable seed or a blade of grass. To him belongeth all power (Ps. lxii: 11; Matt. vi: 13; xxviii: 18). Even the little power of movement, understanding, and construction which we possess is his. It has all been lent to us (Matt. xxv: 14–30).

The principles that relate to spiritual unfoldment and spiritual happiness are in many ways different from the principles of worldly life, or the ideals and practices of communities who live in villages and towns for social and industrial purposes. One of these ideals is to go to church on Sundays, and worship with hands and other bodily limbs, standing, sitting, and kneeling, and uttering set formulas of speech. Other duties relate to the feeding and dressing of the body, the amusement of the mind, the

conciliation of friends, the care of the church and state, and the acquisition of fame and wealth. National laws and customs, social rules, home observances, and all other regulations made by men for men in various spheres of activity have for their object the promotion of considerate thought, good will, and peace. They are limitations put upon those who would otherwise display the freedom of the wild ass, and seriously injure themselves and others with whom they hold intercourse. Godly men therefore have great respect for laws and customs. They do not thrust their spiritual doctrines on those who are satisfied with themselves and their surroundings. Accordingly, in his Sermon on the Mount Jesus forbids his disciples to urge any one to break the rules of the order to which he belongs. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the Prophets," said he, "I am not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. v: 17). The injunctions of lawgivers are intended to restrain self-love, that is, to keep down the element of selfish-

ness in love, so that love itself may not be choked, but may advance to its second stage of growth, called neighbourly love; and the spiritual foreshadowings and exhortations of austere poets, called prophets, show the vainglory of the perishable things of the world and the necessity of fixing the mind on the things of the Spirit. Those who have carefully considered the words of, and the real meaning intended to be conveyed by, these two classes of teachers, and long to hear more of neighbourly love and spiritual mindedness, will be *drawn* in due course to the Apostles of God, and receive from them the higher instruction needed for attaining the third and last stage of spiritual growth, known as Perfect Love (Matt. v: 48); or the Love that transcends breadth and length, depth and height (Eph. iii: 18).

"No man can *come to me*," said Jesus "except the Father who has sent me *draw* him" (John vi: 44), except it be *given unto him* (*to come to me*) by my Father" (ib. vi: 65). It may happen that, when an Apostle

comes into a city or speaks on a public platform, persons may go to hear him out of curiosity or other worldly motive, but that is only coming in contact with the body, one body going to meet another body. Coming together corporeally does not exemplify the great and mysterious *drawing*, which all Apostles know as of absolute truth. It is only when a *spirit*, dissatisfied with sensuous gratification and the hollowness of worldly knowledge, awakens to the necessity of searching for something more real, that it is led on from place to place, it may be through different lands and across oceans, to the full grown spirit called an Apostle of God. It is such thirsty spirits that are qualified to drink of him. Those who are spiritually unripe cannot appreciate his instruction. Indeed, his principles will be distasteful to them. Often they will turn away from him with vehement impatience, especially if they be perched upon high places, delivering wrong doctrines to the multitude. Roused by fear and jealousy, they may seek

to discredit him in various ways. Therefore, said Jesus, "give not that which is holy unto the dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you" (Matt. vii: 6). The methods of rending the Apostle may extend from ridiculing his doctrine to crucifying his body.

Jesus named eight classes of persons as properly qualified to hear the final truths relating to the perfection of Love and Happiness. They are the "poor in spirit," "they that mourn," "the meek," "they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," "the merciful," "the pure in heart," "the peacemakers," and "they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." These are the "sheep" who hear the voice of the good shepherd, the persons who, hearing the eternal principles of Godliness, are fit to *understand* them without difficulty, enter diligently upon the practice of them, and attain the blessedness which Jesus, like the Apostle who sang the first two Psalms commented upon in the

preceding chapter, glorifies in the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount.

The "poor in spirit" are they whose likes and dislikes are of the fewest, and whose spirits therefore feel poor in regard to sensuous enjoyments. "O *Bhikshu*," said a Sage of India, "empty, empty thy boat, for sooner will it run towards Freedom." A *Bhikshu* is one who is conscious that his interest in the vain shews and idle amusements of worldly life has waned greatly. His possessions, however great, count for little in his estimation, such as rank, position, wealth, bodily beauty, and marble halls. They appear to him to be "uncertain riches" (I Tim. vi: 17), to be plainly perishable treasures, and his mind (called "boat" by the Sage, because it is that which was designed to carry the spirit to God) has ceased to be attached to them. To such a pilgrim spirit the work of emptying the mind of all thoughts relating to carnal things cannot be difficult. Worldly likes and dislikes, and the puffed-up sense of "I" and "mine," are obstacles to spiritual

instruction. If the mind is unentangled by them, it will readily grasp the truths relating to God. Hence the necessity for emptying the mind of its lumber. The poor in spirit depleted of worldly cravings are, in the words of St. James (ii: 5), "the poor of the world rich in faith" (that is, love). They are the Lord's own poor spirits. "Forget not the congregation of the poor," said the Psalmist (lxxiv: 19). They receive from the Lord the gift of ripeness for understanding the doctrine of Blessedness.

Even so are "they that mourn" (Matt. v: 4). When one feels depleted of the conceits of I-hood and my-hood, a sadness settles on his heart and face. He goes through his appointed duties well enough, he may even participate in social amusements and keep up an air of merriment, but everything strikes him as being so vain and hollow that he often debates within himself whether life is worth living. He does not understand the change that has come over him, nor the *raison d'être* of the great panorama of life

with all its unexpected developments and shifting scenes of weal and woe. He confesses his utter inability to comprehend himself or the world around him, and groans in spirit that the world, once so full of interest and joy to him, has become so uninteresting and gloomy, though he is not afflicted by disease or physical separation from any person or thing. What means this great change from optimism to pessimism? he asks.

Another class of mourners consists of those who have fallen from plenty to poverty, or lost some dear relation or friend, or been unjustly accused and condemned to forfeit rank, social position, or personal liberty, or are bedridden through disease. There is much weeping and gnashing of teeth in the case of most of them, but a few become thoughtful. They see now what they could not see before — the uncertainty of life and the perishability of everything corporeal. They become sad. Passing through the fire of misfortune, their minds, purified of the

dross of worldliness, are now prepared to hear and understand the principles that relate to the imperishable pleasures of life summed up in the word Blessedness.

These two classes of mourners shall indeed "be comforted," said Jesus, when they learn and realise the truths of spiritual life. They shall be lifted out of pessimism and placed in everlasting joy, which is spiritual optimism.

The meek shall be blessed, for they shall inherit the earth (Matt. v: 5). This was the teaching of the Psalmist also: " The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of Peace" (Ps. xxxvii: 11). The "blessedness" referred to by Jesus is called "peace" by the Psalmist.

These are synonymous terms in the lips of the Apostles of God. The meek are they who "fret not, because of evildoers . . . and . . . cease from anger" (Ps. xxxvii: 1); who are not haughty or high minded (Rom. xi: 20), but practise the art of

forbearance and self-effacement, which develops loving kindness amazingly. They shall soon have the fruit of embodiment, for the spirit was invested with an earthly body only that it may grow in love and attain Blessedness. The inheritance derivable by embodiment or incarnation is perfect Peace and Blessedness.

They who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. v: 6) are also mature enough in spirit to understand and practise the principles of true life. Most people are satisfied with themselves. To dress, eat, make merry, and sleep well is the acme of their happiness. They love amusement, fun, and laughter, as much as good food, stylish dress, and long-drawn sleep. Some want also work and literature of some sort to fill their cup. It is only the fewest of the few who turn their attention inwards and search their hearts. Of what avail is luxury and external cleanliness if worldliness rules the mind? What is the good of being a "whited sepulchre," clean outward but inward full of filth?

The daily discovery of the many subtle ways in which the principle of impurity encompasses the soul while engaged in the transactions of worldly life, and the earnest desire to overcome it, and to live not only according to law but also with a heartfelt regard for the rights and needs of others, is the commencement of the "hunger and thirst after righteousness." When uprightness in thought, word, and deed is the one food for which the soul cries, the Lord will not suffer it to famish (Prov. x: 3). He will fill it with gladness. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness," cried the Psalmist, "for he *satisfieth* the longing soul, and *filleth* the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. cvii: 8, 9). "Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times" (Ps. cvi: 3), for the "voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous" (Ps. cxviii: 15).

Those who are steadfast in their love for righteousness, and suffer hardships, such as jibes and jeers, insults and injuries, at the

hands of undiscerning people, will also be given spiritual joy.

The merciful too will be blessed. They who avoid the temptations of making life burdensome to their enemies, rivals, or subordinates, or who show loving-kindness promptly to those who stand in need of help, will have their own burdens lightened and their way to perfect love made straight and clear.

Similarly, the pure in heart, or those who are without guile, will have the power of understanding the doctrine of perfect love and readily pursuing the methods necessary for the attainment of such love and so entering into actual fellowship with God.

Blessed also shall peacemakers be, for they shall be called sons of God (Matt. v: 9). "Peacemakers," as commonly understood, are those who strive to promote harmony between persons who have misunderstood each other; but what is intended in this verse is pacification of *one's own* thoughts. Opposition and insult, fears and disappointments,

agitate the mind. If sorrow and trouble are to be avoided, the thought that provokes them must be calmed by a process of "never minding." As soon as the mind thinks of the cause of the agitation, this must be dismissed from it: the mind must not be allowed to return to it. None of the incidents connected with it should be contemplated. "Cast down imaginations," said St. Paul, "that exalt against God" (II Cor. x: 5), that is, abate all thoughts that rise against the Spirit of Infinite Love, for the interests of the Soul are greater than those of the body. The mind should not make mountains of a matter which relates after all only to a lump of flesh, that is, our body or some other corporeal possession which will soon perish or pass away. Life was given most assuredly for love, not hate; for peace, not strife; for wisdom, not folly. By such considerations, many a man is found in every country to be letting his thoughts run down to a comparative calm in worldly life, and he has his reward: he is naturally qualified

to follow the teachings of the Apostle as to the making of Perfect Peace in spiritual communion, the "Peace which passeth understanding" (Phil. iv: 7), the Peace which ordinary men cannot understand or think of. Such peacemakers shall be called, shall be known among sanctified men, as Sons of God, said Jesus; or Christs, said St. Paul, for by due instruction and in due order (I Cor. xv: 23) we "*all* come unto (that is, grow to be) a perfect man (that is) come unto (or reach) the stature (or status) of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv: 13). It is the God of Peace who makes man perfect (Heb. xiii: 20), through his Apostles, who bring to qualified spirits the Gospel of Peace, which to all others is a mystery (Eph. vi: 15, 19). Jesus Christ, like other Apostles of God, came and preached Peace (Eph. ii: 17), and those who have been thought worthy of the Gospel of Peace should "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace," said St. Paul (Eph. iv: 3), that is, they should take care to maintain their union with God by the chain called

Peace. It is their duty and privilege to be *making* Peace or Perfect Love, so as to enter into fellowship with God. The word "Peace," derived from Lat. *pax*, *pacis*, is the same as *paksha* in Sanskrit, which means love.

Like a good housewife who intelligently makes butter by submitting milk to the different processes of boiling, churning, and separating, the man who would be good and acceptable to God must make love out of the kindness of his heart. Except for worldly life he will not know the difference between love and hate, nor the good and bad consequences of either. Home and society are the purifying fires necessary for bringing the milk-pan, called the heart, to the boiling point, when love and hate rise to the surface. Once invisible, now they are manifest to the spirit. This compound of love and hate, which may be called the "cream" of human nature, is supposed to be the sum and substance of life, the be-all and end-all of existence, beyond which people fancy nothing

remains but death. This is so in the case of most persons. But most assuredly they are re-embodied and sent back to earthly life again and again to learn to see the desecration of hate and its parent folly. And so in every generation there arise a few persons who have discernment enough to perceive that in this life they should "*churn* the cream" by the instrument called reason, and *separate* that which is sour from that which is sweet. This work of separating love from hate and gathering together the fragments of love during the process of consideration and meditation, so as to make daily the lump or "body" of love grow larger and larger, becomes to them the real meaning and chief concern of earthly life. To form the body of Christ within us (Gal. iv: 19), even as a good housewife forms balls of butter, is indeed possible to those who have loving-kindness enough in them to practise the art of allowing their thoughts to run down to a beautiful calm.

The subsidence of *all* thoughts in spiritual

communion, while unconquered by sleep, is known to Sages as the "end of the world" (Matt. xxiv: 3). Then comes Love to the fore, even as the sun comes out of the clouds. This is called the "rising of the day star in our heart" (II Pet. i: 19), or the "Day of the Lord" (II Pet. iii. 10) or the "Coming of Christ" (Matt. xxiv: 3, 27).

The learned Scribes and Pharisees who sat on the seat of Moses did not understand the spirit of his teachings. They, said Jesus, were careful enough to pay the taxes due on such little garden produce as mint, anise, and cummin seed, but wholly neglected to heed the weightier matters of the law, namely, discernment of the spirit (*krisis*), mercy to men (*eleos*), and love of God (*pistis*). They decked themselves in striking garments and imposed on their congregations burdensome rules and practices, which did not give them any knowledge whatever of God. They have shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, he cried; they neither go in themselves, nor suffer others that are entering to go in.

Behold, O Jerusalem, your house of God is desolate for want of true worshippers (Matt. xxiii: 4–38).

Jesus turned from the worldly minded Scribes and Pharisees to his disciples and prophesied the destruction of the great Temple. On previous occasions he had spoken to them of the day of Judgment (Matt. x: 15), and of the end of the world (ib. xiii: 40–49), and now that he referred to the destruction of the temple, they thought, in terms of the popular belief of the times, that the Messiah, who was to spring from the line of David, was about to appear on Mount Moriah, and establish a universal empire. So they asked him, while seated on the Mount of Olives, which commanded a good view of the Temple, "When shall these things be? What shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Jesus then took great pains to dispel from their minds the popular delusion regarding these two subjects. His exposition is given at length in Chapter xxiv of St. Matthew.

"Take heed that no man deceive you," said he: the "coming of Christ" is not an event that takes place abroad, but is an experience within you, so that if any man say Lo, *here* is Christ, or *there* is Christ, believe it not. He is not to be found in the desert or in mountain caves. Nor is the coming of Christ associated with signs and wonders in the outer world, such as earthquakes, wars, famines, and plagues. The signs occur within the body only. They are all spiritual signs or signs manifested to the spirit in the spirit itself. It is not meet that such spiritual experiences should be divulged too openly, but Jesus has specified some of the signs (Matt. xxiv: 29–31); and so have Peter (II Pet. iii: 10–12) and Paul (I Thes. iv: 16). These signs are vouchsafed to the spirit at its "rising" or "coming" or "re-birth" in order that it may not have any doubt of its Own True Being. They consist of internal sounds, like trumpet blasts and blowing of gales; sights like lightning flashes; and the feeling of all one's I-ness and my-ness

consumed in a great melting furnace. Amidst a distressing sense of a general conflagration and "melting" of the elements of thought, and of a crumbling up of all mental states, comes an indescribable Calm, accompanied with a great and hallowing Effulgence, which, growing every instant, innundates the whole body and, *getting beyond its bounds*, like a river that has swept over its banks, *flows in every direction* far and wide as *Love Absolute*, as Love unconditioned by quantity or quality.

This grand spiritual experience or discovery on the part of the full-grown Soul that it *is* Perfect Love, transcending all finiteness, is incomprehensible (John iii: 4, 9, 10) to the "natural man" (I Cor. ii: 14). His mind cannot grasp this infinite *knowledge* (John xvii: 3), this soul-knowledge, called *Átma darśana* by Sages in India. But if his selfish love, or the love that is in bondage to worldly likes and dislikes, gradually puts away such fetters and learns of Godly men the methods of attaining Perfect Love, it will soon grow into neighbourly love, and then

in due time into Perfect Love which is as wide as space. "Rooted and grounded in love," said St. Paul, it is indeed possible in spiritual communion "to comprehend, with all the saints (*i.e.*, as all sanctified men have experienced heretofore), what the breadth and length and depth and height is" of that Perfect Love (Eph. iii: 17, 18).

This wonderful manifestation (John xiv: 20) or appearance (during spiritual communion) of the Spirit as Perfect Love in all its formless beauty (Isa. liii: 2) is known as its "second birth" (John iii: 3; I Pet. i: 23), in reference to its "first birth" or appearance in worldliness. In order to emancipate it from worldliness, it was given many a body and many a sphere of action. During these careers on earth, encased in the mind-organism called by Sages the "womb" of mother-nature (Sansk. *garbha* : see *Anugita*, chap. v.; Gr. *koilia*: see Ps. xxii: 9 and Gal. i: 15), the spirit learns the dangers of being in association with impurity and at last craves to be free from it. "Deliver me, O my God,

out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man," it cries. "Thou, who hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt *quicken* me again; and shalt bring me again from the depths of the earth" (Ps. lxxi: 4, 20). "Turn me from vanity and *quicken* me in thy way, in thy righteousness. Thy word hath *quickened* me" (Ps. cxix: 37, 40, 50). Hearing the sound doctrine of Godliness, the soul is *quickened* in its mind-womb. *It then knows it is something other than the mind and senses.* It is certain that it is neither thought nor sense perception. The man of God teaches him that, like God, it is Love, not the love that springs from sexhood, but the love that stands isolate from all that is flesh, even as God is Love, purest and perfect. If the spirit labours for its fullest maturity, by performing its round of worldly duties in utmost love and by waiting upon the Lord *daily* in *spiritual communion*, according to the methods known to the sanctified, it will most assuredly outgrow the limitations of

the mind, and be *delivered* in its own proper form as Boundless Love. This delivery of the Spirit from the entanglements of mind and body, and the knowledge of its independent existence as Perfect Love, is the second birth of the spirit. The first birth is its fall into worldliness. The second birth is its rise to Godliness, or full knowledge of God, while on earth and in the body.

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